

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Faculty of Philosophy

ICS-Programme

Marie Eyongakpa

Youth Participation in religious activities: Case study of the Congregations
of Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi Churches in Helsinki, Finland and
the Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon
A Comparative Perspective

Master's thesis

Vaasa 2012

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UNIVERSITY OF VAASA
Faculty of Philosophy:
Discipline:

ICS

Author:

Marie Eyongakpa

Master's Thesis:

Youth participation in religious activities: Case study of the Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi Churches in Helsinki, Finland and Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon. A comparative perspective.

Degree:

Master of Arts

Date:

2012

Supervisor:
Prof Christoph Parry

ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of culture on youth participation in three congregations; Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Finland and the Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon.

The study hypothesized that youth in Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations' participation in the Church is primarily for socialisation reasons while spiritual concept is secondary whereas, the reverse is seen in Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon.

The methodology of the study was based on Charles. C.Ragins comparative case study method with qualitative perspective, with the use of a designed interview template to gather empirical data, and results analysed. Case study methods were used to denote the similarities and differences in the three congregations through their structure, policies and youth activities.

The two main challenges were, getting data and materials from Cameroon and Finnish language barrier but I resorted to group interviews which were resourceful.

The study explores the factors influencing youth attitudes towards the Church, impact of Church policies and its implementation towards youth work, evaluating the degree of youth work through their active participation in Church and recommendations for future youth work from youths, youth coordinators, pastors and some church authorities.

The study result acknowledges three factors influencing youth's participation in the Church, the Church structure, policy and its implementation and culture.

KEYWORDS: Church, Youths, Participation, Mikael Agricola, Munkkiniemi, Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Culture and Spiritual.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank God almighty for his guidance during my study period in Vaasa. Thanks to the entire staffs of the faculty of Philosophy in Vaasa.

Special thanks go to all my respondents for accepting my interview invitations especially Rev. Miki Hans Abbia for feeding me with materials from Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Rev. Dr Raine Haikarainen, Saarinen Hertta, Lehto Mika, Anju lahtinen, Rev. Francis Ekola and Rev. Daniel Ayuk.

Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my entire family for their moral support especially Vivian Eyongakpa for undertaking the interview in Cameroon, Tarhyang Tabe, Jarkko Ylimäki for his continuous moral and financial support during my research period and Charis Ylimäki who inspired me to complete my study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Church is the community of God's people brought together through the work of the Holy Spirit. It consist of all those who response to the call of Jesus Christ and acknowledges him as their lord and saviour. The church is the human institution that witness to right, justice, truth and peace in the social, economic and political life of the country in which it lives (Book of orders 1995: 3.)

Religion has played a fundamental role in the lives of people in the community through politics and culture. People's cultures do have a great deal to do with their religious life. Religion in the form of Pentecostalism, fundamentalism, charismatic movements and revivalism are flourishing in America, Africa and South East Asia, whereas in China and Vietnam, religion is under liberal government politics while Europe and North American with a large religious minorities are changing to a predominantly secular societies (Bryans 2010: 1).

This research examines youth participation in religious activities in three congregations, Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi in Helsinki, Finland under the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon.

The first chapter covers an introduction with background information about the relationship between the Church and the state, the aim of the study, hypothesis, research question and research method. Chapter two covers the theoretical frame work and methodology of the study. Some cultural theories cited justifies why people behave differently as a result of cultural differences and the methodology entails a comparative study based on Charles C Ragins comparative research with the use of qualitative method through a designed interview template used in the three congregations. Chapter three focuses on the structure, policies on youth work, youth's attitudes in the church, youth's activities and their future vision of youth work in two congregations, Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland. Chapter four covers the structure of Presbyterian Church, church policy, youth work, youth's

attitudes in the church, youth's activities and their future vision in Down Beach Limbe. Chapter five covers, the comparative perspective of the three congregations with emphasis on their similarities and differences. And the last chapter six covers result of the study and conclusion.

Finland is a Nordic country formerly governed by the Swedish and Russians. Finland is also a bilingual country with two official languages, Finnish and Swedish.

In Finland, the church and the state have carried out their duties in closed union. During the middle age the church in Finland was Roman Catholic and during reformation in the sixteenth century, the church changed to Lutheran. During the age of enlightenment, it was compulsory for all to belong to the church. The Russia era (1809-1917) where Finland was separated from Sweden, the church had a large degree of autonomy and was able to form a decision making body of its own. When Finland had its independence in 1917, the church was an administrative independent entity and the church had the right to collect tax and in 1922, the freedom of religion act was passed where everyone had the right to confess their own faith (Antola et al 2006: 27-28).

The cathedral of Helsinki is the main church in the Helsinki diocese made up of eighteen Finnish speaking parishes and three Swedish speaking parishes. Mikael Agricola church is a Finnish speaking parish in the Helsinki cathedral church organization (Helsinki tuomiokirkkoseurakunnan organisaatio) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The Helsinki (tuomiokirkkoseurakunnan) cathedral consists of five parishes Mikael Agricola, the castle church in Finland, St John's parish, the old church and the chapel of Ruolahti (Kirkko Helsingissä.)

Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations in which this study is based, is in Helsinki which has been the capital of Finland for two hundred years in 2012. Helsinki is found in the South Eastern Finland. Finland is a welfare state whose economic success has influenced Finns culturally and spiritually.

Munkkiniemi is a neighborhood in the West of Helsinki. Munkkiniemi is characterized by a high proportion of Swedish speaking population. Sub division within the regions

are Vanha Munkkineimi, Kuusisaari, Lehtisaari, Munkkivuori, Niemenmäki and Talinranta. Mikael Agricola is suited in the Southern Helsinki closed to the city centre.

Cameroon is a country located in Central West Africa bordered to the West by Nigeria, to the North by Chad, to the East by Central Africa Republic and to the South by Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Congo. Cameroon landscape is characterized with beaches, rain forest, savannah and mountain. Cameroon has a diversified ethnic group with different cultural views which has greatly influenced the people. The economic situation is bad due to poor management of funds and inequitable distribution of income resulting to high unemployment of many youths which has affected the living standard. This economic effect has greatly affected the spiritual and social life of young Cameroonians.

The Church is an independent institute with no link to the state. Cameroonians have the right of freedom of worship. There are many denominations in Cameroon; Catholic, protestant, Baptist, and Pentecostal with none having greater influence over the others. Cameroons official languages are English and French. This study is based on the Christian youth movement of Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe.

1.1 Aim of study and research question

The aim of the study is to understand if identity and cultural values have influence on youths' participation in religious activities in these congregations. The target groups are youths and I am interested in factors influencing the spiritual growth of youths.

Firstly, what motivated me to research on youth's participation in these parishes was my personal experience in both countries. I have been a Christian youth fellowship member of the Presbyterian Church and have seen how youths are active in the church which was quite different in Finland after worshipping at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Vantaa. I decided to carry out a comparative research in order to answer questions related to identity, cultural values, church policy and factors influencing young people attitude in the church. I initially wanted to conduct my research in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Vantaa where I had worshiped and noticed that majority of the people were older people in the church and started wondering where are the youths?

After having an interview with the youth coordinator of Vantaa, I noticed the youths do have a “Friday café” which is more like a social evening and the confirmation camp meetings which were not frequent because of the poor turnover with a minimum number of youths being ten before a trip could be booked. It was difficult for me to meet the youths and get started, I finally decided to make enquires about Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Helsinki where I live and finally had contact with the Secretary of Helsinki diocese who directed me to the youths coordinator of Munkkiniemi congregation. After having an interview with the youth coordinator in Munkkiniemi who gave me an overview of youth work, I caught interest because I realized it was dominated by Swedish speaking Finns and had positive youth activities. And since my study was based on cultural impact on youth work I decided to undertake the study in Munkkiniemi. Since my target was the youth, I requested to undertake an interview with the youths and she promised to link me with some youths of eighteen and nineteen years. I had a group interview with the youths which confirmed the results of the interview I had with the youth coordinator and decided to move on.

In the course of my research I came in contact with one of the assistant youth coordinator of Mikael Agricola, I made some enquires about youth work to be sure if it existed and she promised to have a word with the youth coordinator before giving me assurance for future interviews. Notwithstanding, I was invited to attend one of their Wednesday services where most youths can be contacted. I visited the Wednesday service which was quite amazing with a turnout of over 200 youths which gave me a close picture of my home congregation. I was indeed glad to realize such a turnout in Finland when comparing Vantaa and Munkkiniemi I visited. I was interested to know what have been the attractive forces for this massive turn out of youths in Mikael Agricola.

Secondly, I chose the two congregations Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi in Helsinki because of the difference in their cultural backgrounds although under the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Mikael Agricola has a Finnish background while Munkkiniemi is bilingual (Swedish / Finnish) dominated by Swedish speaking population. I thought researching on these two congregations will give me an idea on

cultural impact on youth work. And Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe was chosen because it was the place where the first youth movement was established. Moreover, active youth work in Presbyterian Church has been my first the motivating factor for this comparative study.

Thirdly, I choose the Finnish Evangelical Church because it is a state Church while the Presbyterian Church is an independent congregation. Thus comparing and contrasting both policies in relation to youth work will be of great importance.

The research will be genuinely a comparative study with a strong empirical focus on interviews from youths, youth coordinators ,pastor and other church officials linked to youth work and my research questions are;

1. What factors influence youths' attitudes towards the church?
2. Does church policy have an impact on youth work?
3. How active are youths in these three congregations; Mikael Agricola, Munkkiniemi and Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe.

These research questions will enable me understand facts about policies, youths' attitudes and their participation in the church and since it is a comparative study, it might help ameliorate youths participation in the future to an extent and will enable policy makers to have a different picture for the decision making process in youth policies.

A hypothesis of the study is ¹“Spirituality is the primary goal for youth participation in the church while socialization is secondary for youth work in Christian youth fellowship (CYF) in Presbyterian Church in Cameroon while socialization is the primary reason and spirituality secondary in youth's participation in Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi

¹ Spirituality in the context of this study entails Christian devotion to bible study and their belief in God almighty.

congregations in Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland”. This will be answered at the end of the research findings.

Age is an important factor linked to human behavior. Since the research is based on youth participation in the church we need to examine the age ranges in the different congregation to see if it has an impact on youth work.

Other important issues will be confirmation training in the various communities, their similarities and differences in confirmation process and its significance to youths in those congregations.

The challenges faced by the youths and recommendations and vision for future youth works are important findings for the study.

1.2 Research method

This study is a qualitative research based on individual and group interviews using a tape recorded and hand written manuscripts. The interviews entail two phases; youth coordinators and pastors and the youths in all three congregations. Interviews in Cameroon took the form of tape recorder and hand written manuscripts which entails open and close ended interviews because I could not travel to Cameroon myself to gather data. In some instances, emails and phone calls have been involved in order to collect data. In Cameroon the pastor of Down Beach Limbe was interviewed, the national youth secretary, two members of ²CYF Down Beach Limbe. Four members of CYF Down Beach Limbe under took hand written manuscripts based on the same templates as per the interview aided by a tape recorder.

In Finland, interviews have taken two dimensions, individual and group interviews because of language barrier which has been one of my challenges in the course of my research. I decided to carry out group interviews with the youth coordinator of Agricola congregation and the youths in the two congregations in Finland. All interviews

² Christian youth fellowship (C.Y.F.)

conducted in Helsinki have been open ended with the use of an interview template and a tape recorder. The Evangelical Lutheran secretary of Helsinki diocese was interviewed, the youth coordinator and the two youth workers of Mikael Agricola in a group interview, six youths members of Agricola Church in a group interview and in Munkkiniemi congregation, the youth leader was interviewed, the youth representative of the church council who is also a member of the youths movement and two group interview in groups of two and three respectively.

The interviews were transcript and results analyzed in other to come out with a comparative study. Do hope the results will help strengthen some congregations in taking a different scope in youth work.

2 .THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Theoretical framework.

The main theoretical concept is on cultural identity and the socio-psychological impact among adolescent which is my target group in Mikael Agricola, Munkkiniemi in Helsinki, Finland and Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon. It is a comparative study of youth participation in these congregations with three different cultural traits such as; Mikael Agricola with Finnish traits, Munkkiniemi with Swedish and Finnish back grounds and Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe with Cameroon cultural traits. These different cultural traits have influenced youth work spatially in these three congregations.

Identity is a social factor which can be attributed to cultural traits individually or in a collective scale. Identity can only be constructed when social actors are internalised in individuals. A persons` behaviour is influence by self-attitude even though social actors attribute to an extent (Ellemers et al 1999:8).Social factors have influence youth participation in the church as seen in the three congregations because of cultural differences. Societies have a great impact on the identity of an individual which may results from cultural traits and can be traced from infancy from the environment a person grew up.

David Bohn, in *Human Nature as the product of Our Mental Model* states that “Concepts of the self-operate in the individual and in the society as functional realities which play a key part in helping to fix the bounds of that very human nature of which they are supposed to be model” (Gergen 1991:4.) My spirituality can be traced from my home doctrine and community I grow up which has influence my whole life to an extent. I’m from a Christian background and started my Christian faith through my mothers’ inspiration by taking me to church which enables to develop interest and the love to do the things of God. All my friends came from that same Christian forum

which has influence my behaviour and my social network. Based on my personal experience in life, the environment has a great role in our life. Some traditional practises like the confirmation training for youths from fifteen years in the Evangelical Lutheran Church has influence their participation in the church.

Tajfel and Turner conceptualized social identity as an aspect of a person's self-concept based on group membership with associated values and emotional significant (Ellemers et al 1999: 8.) Social network was a significant attractive force for youth participation in the church, in Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations where youths' motivation of coming to church was based on socialisation and relaxation not because of their faith in God. On the other hand, socialisation reasons which have been a push factors has also brought some youths in to spiritual encounter with God because in the course of their activities they have had opportunity to listen to some biblical teachings which has transformed their lives. In Presbyterian Church, youth's participation is more of spiritual encounter and a faith builder even though economic reasons have also drawn the youths closer to God to an extent due to high unemployment rate causing more people to seek God for supernatural blessings for a better future since God is their last hope. In a nutshell, spiritual hope has been the first motive in all youth work in Christian youth fellowship (C.Y.F) in Presbyterian Church, Cameroon based on the youth work curriculum others are just secondary not a fact.

According to Tajfel, three aspects of social identity can be outlined; the psychological analysis of the cognitive motivation needed for social identity, analysis of real world situation in an intergroup relation and hypothesis of interpersonal and intergroup actions in defining personal relationship and behaviours to explain how social interaction differs and explains social identity (Ellemers et al 1999: 11.) Individual are different and have different motivating factors for all their action undertaken even though some actions could be influenced by the society they live but the mental state of a person has a lot to play in his or her actions.

According to Gergen the process of social saturation in profound change in our ways of understanding of self in the cultural life in the twentieth century has been dominated by

two categories of the self. In the nineteenth century, we have inherited a romanticist view of self, one that attributes to each person characteristic of personal depth: passion, soul, creativity and moral fibre essential in the formation of deeply committed relationship, dedicated friendship and life purposes. But the romantic vocabulary has been threatened by modernist world of the early twentieth century's with self-residence not in the domain of depth but rather in our ability to reason in our belief, opinions and conscious intention. Social saturation furnishes us with a multiplicity of incoherent and unrelated languages of the self (Gergen 1991: 6). The society has a great impact on individual attitudes as seen in the way youth conceive the church through the media which has affected their participation in the church in these congregations.

According to Erikson, the autobiographies of extraordinary individuals are a suggestive source of insight into the development of identity. His longitudinal studies of personality development of children and guidance work with mildly disturbed children, relate that adolescent process is complete only when the individual has subordinated his childhood identification to a new kind of identification achieved in absorbing sociability and in competitive apprenticeship with among his age mates. The individual is forced in to choices and decision enabling the final decision to be reached for a final self-identification. Societies offer as individuals requires a more or less sanction intermediate period between childhood, adulthood, institutional psycho social moratoria during which a lasting pattern of inner identity is complete (Erikson 1959:110-111.) All three congregations had a chain of childhood spiritual development from children and family work and clubs in Helsinki congregations to Sunday school and Young Presbyterians for the children in Cameroon which has influence their spiritual growth. The cultural aspects like the confirmation training for young adults in Finland has also influenced youth's participation in the church because many who have attended the training camps have admired it and have been engaged into more devotion to leadership training. The confirmation training in Presbyterian Church has been a booster of faith because youth are engaged in to in depth study of the bible which has had a positive effect in their life.

2.2 Methodology

The research methodology comprises Ragin's comparative research method through case study as seen in these three different congregations and the qualitative research method by the use of interviews and hand written manuscripts.

2.2.1 Comparative method

According to Ragin, the fundamental goal of social researchers is to identify order and regularity in the complexity of social life and try to make sense of it. This could be done through testing theories about social life contributing to a larger goal of identifying order in complexity (Ragin 1994:31.) Theories can therefore be tested by identifying concepts in different societies and comparing their outcomes.

According to Ragin, comparative researchers examine patterns of similarities and differences involving a number of limited cases in order to familiarize the cases in the study. Thus, knowledge of the cases is an important goal in the study and when researching on diversity, by contrast, the category of phenomenon being investigated should be specific in the outset with the main goal of explaining the diversity in the cases investigated (Ragin 1994:105.) The main difference between comparative research and other qualitative research is the basic orientation towards case differences. A comparative researcher who focuses on diversity, on contrast by studying patterns of similarities and differences tries to examine diversity of the cases.

³This study is basically a comparative case study of three congregations; Mikael Agricola, Munkkiniemi and Presbyterian Church on youth participation in these congregations. The diversity of youth work can only be analyzed when comparing the similarities and differences of the three congregations revealed after interviews were conducted. The comparative method used in the study is exploring diversity and

³ Details on comparative methodology in different societies could be seen in Oyén, Else (Ed). (1990).

interpreting culturally or historical significant phenomena in the three congregations. The first goal of my research is to identify the general pattern of youth participation and the relationship that exist in the three congregations. Policy of the church is an important instrument for youth work because differences in youth participation could be traced from the pattern of the implementation of the church policy towards youth work. Knowledge about the pattern of youth participation in these three congregations was gotten by interviewing youths, youth coordinators and some pastors through a design interview template.

Knowledge about specific situation is important because every situation is unique and the best result could be seen when comparing other cases. The results of the interviews were analysed in order to get the similarities and differences in the structure, policies of the church, youth activities, attitudes towards the church and challenges in these three congregations.

Making prediction is also one of the goals of social research according to Ragin, what motivated me to carry out this research was the hypothesis that youth work is for socialisation reason in European context because only old people are seen during Sunday service whereas, socialisation is secondary for youth work in Presbyterian Church. A theory can only be justify after been tested likewise a hypothesis could be justify only after been researched on.

Knowledge of cultural and historical events is relevant in comparative research because events can be understood better through the interpretation of historical and cultural phenomenon. The confirmation training, training camps and manner of worship service has some cultural and historical values which has influenced youth participation in these congregations. Socialisation reason has also been the primary goal of youth work in the two congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church even though spiritual growth has a role to play whereas, the strong cultural affirmation of spiritual growth has been the main motive for Christian youth fellowship movements of the Presbyterian Church when analysing the culture and history of the people.

According to Ragin, exploring diversity is one of the major goals in social research which may seem similar to identifying general pattern and does comprehend in some respects; it is quite different when exploring diversity furthers an understanding and appreciation of socio-diversity (Ragin 1994:41.) One major issue was the policy of the church towards youth work in the three congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church has a youth policy and the implementation was one of the aspects which created the differences in the two congregations because the youth coordinators had different strategies in youth work whereas all the Christian youth fellowship groups of Presbyterian Church had a common policy designed by the youth's department. Researchers therefore ignore general patterns and focus on diversities in order to outline the comparative aspect of the study.

2.2.2 Qualitative method

After choosing the three congregations to base my research on, I developed an interview template based on the category of interest for my study. The interview had two phases, individual and group interviews due to language barrier and also hand written manuscripts from youth in Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe who were not interviewed. An analytical approach was used from the data gathered. Analyzing pattern of differences and similarities in the study can be seen in chapter six in the paper.

The study entails a theoretical and empirical nature of research where by information where gotten from previous study and interviews conducted in the three congregations involved Mikael Agricola, Munkkiniemi, Finland and Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon. The interviews were tape recorded and manually transcribed.

Interviews were conducted in two phases, youth leaders and coordinators, Helsinki diocese secretary, pastors and youths in the various congregations. The reason behind this random interview sample was to get an overall picture of the whole situations from leaders and youth perspective in order to get the similarities and differences and ameliorate the situation in the future.

Interviews were based on individual and group interviews. Basically group interviews were conducted in Mikael Agricola involving the youth coordinator and the two assistant youth leaders, and six youths. In Munkkiniemi congregation, the youth coordinator was interviewed individually, a youth who is a representative in church council (Ruuti) and two group interviews involving two and three youths respectively making a total of six youths involved. The language of communication was English in both congregations. I resorted to group interviews because of language barrier since the interviewees' couldn't understand English well since Finnish is their official language. In order to get overview knowledge of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland since two congregations were involved, I decided to interview the secretary of Helsinki diocese.

In Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, interviews were basically individually. The nature of the interview conducted took two phases; tape recorder and hand written manuscript from the same designed interview template. The interviews were basically open and close ended interviews. The interview at Down Beach Limbe was conducted by my sister who has been a member of C.Y.F but the templates were designed by me since I could not go to Cameroon to collect data. A common interview template was used in the three congregations. The interview conducted by the use of a tape recorder was sent to me. Those interviewed include; the pastor of Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, the national youth secretary, two group members and four members sent manual transcript following the interview template quest which were close ended. There were instances of phone calls and e-mails on areas which were not clear.

Data collected from all the interviewees were transcript and results analysed. Below is the interview template used in the study?

INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

1. How is the church structured?
2. Does the church have a policy towards youth work?
3. Does this policy influence youth participation in the church?

4. Which are some of the activities in which youths are involved in the church?
5. What factors influence youth's participation in the church?
6. Which challenges are faced by the youths?
7. Do the media influence youth's attitudes in the church?
8. Is there vision for youth work in the future?
9. Which recommendation do you have for future youth work?

3. THE STRUCTURE OF FINNISH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN MIKAEL AGRICOLA AND MUNKKINIEMI CONGREGATIONS IN HELSINKI, FINLAND

3.1 The structure of Evangelical Lutheran Church

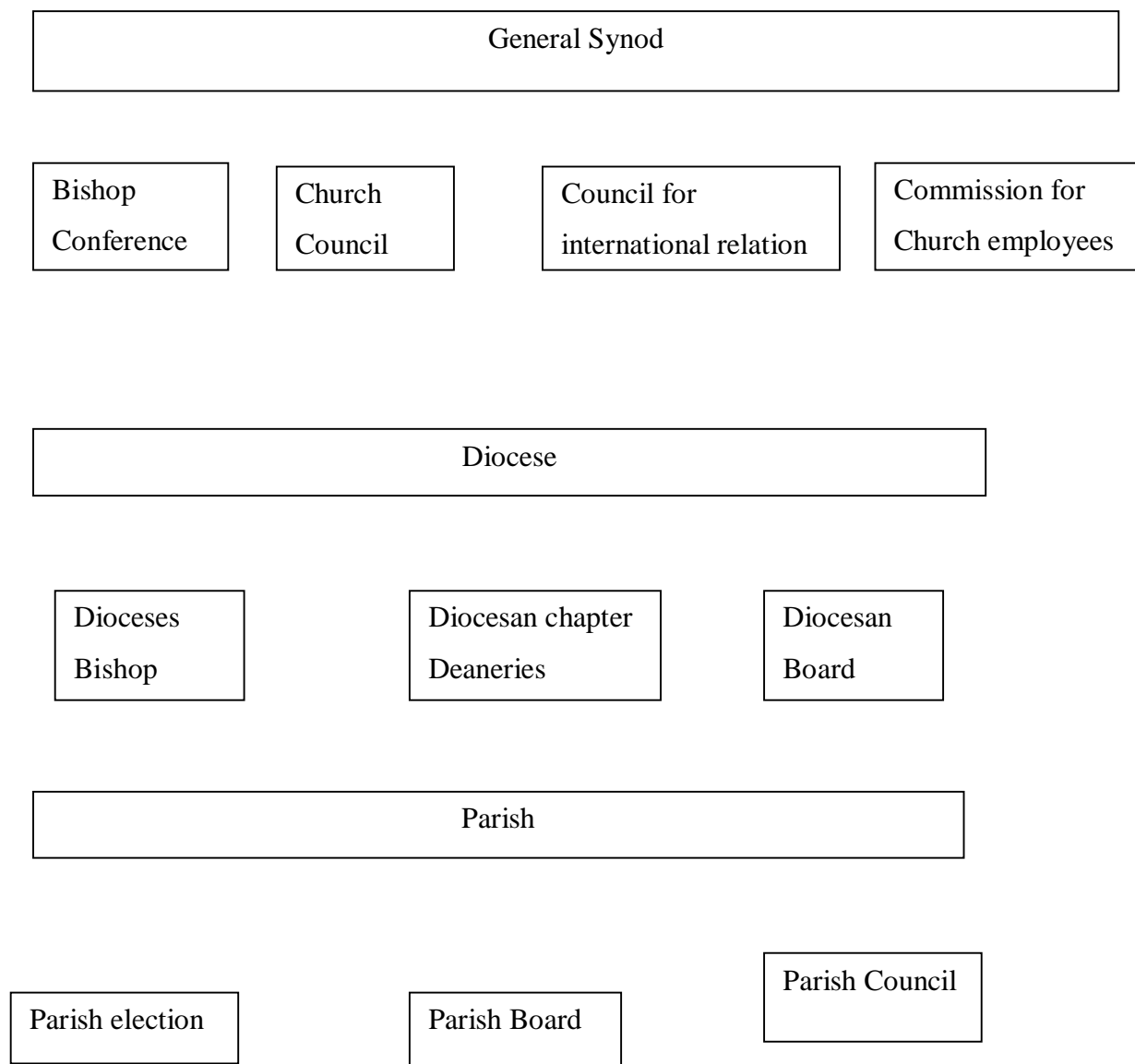
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is divided in to nine dioceses with 466 parishes and each parish is an independent working unit. ⁴The dioceses include, Turku, Tampere, Oulu, Mikkeli, Porvoo, Kuopio, Lapua, Helsinki and Espoo. Parishes in the same municipalities or cities belong to the same parish union and the same parish board. Each parish in the union has a parish council corresponding to the parish council of a single parish. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is a state church with public finances from taxes from their Christian members in the form of membership fee collected together with state communal tax (Kirkko Helsingissä)

Locally elected parish officials determines tax rate to be collected from it members. The church also tax cooperation irrespective of whether their employees are church members which is justified through social services such as diaconia and maintenance of grave yards and church property (Antola et al 2006: 49.)

Table 1

⁴ Markku Antola, Marketta,& et el (p, 49-50) gives details explanation of church administration

THE STRUCTURE OF FINNISH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH



(Kirkko Helsingissä)

The general synod is the highest authority in decision making of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland. It deals with the church work, doctrine, administration,

legislation and financial matters of the church. The permanent members of the general synod include, the Bishops, the chaplain generals, 32 clergy representatives, 64 elected lay representatives of the diocese, state representatives, and a Sami representative elected by the Sami parliament. The general synod chair person is the archbishop. The general synod has a weeklong session twice a year (Kirkko Helsingissä.)

The general synod is responsible for the approval of a new bible translation, Christian doctrine, hymnals, church hand books, mass composition, approves church order, order of church election.

The general synod also makes statement and proposals to the Council of State in issues relating to the church and the state and with other denominations in important issues such as marriage and family, human right, employment, social security, church taxation, public education, religious instruction and so on. The general synod decides on the relationship of the church with other churches and religious groups and a federation of churches. It also decides on the establishment of new dioceses.

The general synod nominates and dismisses the archbishop, bishops, heads of church council units, and elected member of the church council. It also confirms the budget proposal of the central church fund and decides how much parishes must pay annually (Kirkko Helsingissä)

In the Finnish Evangelical Church, the bishop leads the administration of each diocese and oversees parishes and clergy. In 1817, after Finland was separated from Sweden, Turku, the oldest diocese, became an archdiocese. Since 1998, Turku has had two bishops the archbishop and another bishop. The archbishop acts as the chairperson of several national church bodies including the general synod, the church council, the bishop conference and international relations. Ten bishops hold power in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland. A bishop is responsible to ordain pastors (Kirkko Helsingissä.)

The church council is responsible for administration, finance and church activities. The archbishop is the chairperson in the church council other members include two bishops

elected four years by the bishops' conference, two pastors, and eight lay people whom the synod has chosen for the same period of time. The church council has the following departments, secretary, administration department, department for church personnel's, financial department, department for parish services, department for international relation, and separate units which include communication centre, the church research institute, activities in Swedish, office of bishop conference and office of the Bishop (Kirkko Helsingissä .)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland has a total of nine dioceses and Espoo is the newest diocese created in 2004 and Provo is typical of Swedish speaking churches. A diocese is made up of parishes with the same bishop. The dioceses are divided into deaneries which consist of parishes near each other. A bishop is the spiritual overseer of a diocese and chairman of a council who take care of the administration of the diocese. The diocese council board is called diocesan board. The diocesan board is made up of fourteen lay members representing the parishes in the diocese and seven lay clergy. The diocesan has decision making power and has the right to send proposers to the general synod (Kirkko Helsingissä).

Local parishes in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland are independent bodies with democratic administrative policy based on the individual in the parish. Every parish has a parish board which is the supreme decision making body elected every four years. The parish board approves annual budget proposal, determine church tax to be charged, create and eliminate parish offices when necessary. The parish board select the parish council which is the highest executive board responsible for execution of decision made by the parish board. The parish council elect majority of parish staffs and the diocesan board appoint pastors proposed by the parish council. Parishes within the same municipality or cities belong to the same parish board. (Kirkko Helsingissä.)

3.1.1 The policy of the Church

Based on the interview with the secretary of Helsinki diocese, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church has some common strategies and programme for youth work. The diocese has their own strategically ways and the parishes have their own plan and policies. Different policies are made on different levels. There are quite a number of factors which influence these policies such as sociological, ideological and theological in the past years because Finland has undergone very strong cultural changes in the past ten to twenty years and the postmodern era has changed the way of thinking and common life and people have turned to be individualistic as compared to those in the past. People are more independent to choose their own ideas, ways of life and also create their own religious thinking because they pick up species from different kind of ideological sources and put them together to create their individualistic way of life. This has been a big challenge for the church because the church has always represented a certain kind of universal values and have not emphasised on individual values. The value of change has influence youth work to an extent because it is difficult to find a more common factor and common experience and symbol which could gather all kind of people. The church is trying to create a new kind of symbol to move forward and the confirmation training is a long traditional Christian value in the Evangelical Lutheran Church which is still strong today. About 90% of youths participate in confirmation training as compared to some other European countries such as Sweden with about 30% and United Kingdom with only 10%. It is still important for young people to appreciate the traditional prayer life and opportunity to share experiences of science which has dominated the media today because people represent different ideological views of life but the basic Christian rule is still important as youths are still participating in this traditional doctrine of confirmation training.

The question we need to find out is if these policy influences youths attitude in the church?

Based on the Helsinki diocese secretary view, the church have lots of different types of strategies plan, programmes, books and materials for youth work but parishes have their

own plans which are generally youth work visions and strategies. In the past ten years, the main theme developed for young starting from ten to fourteen years has been “God exists” life is now and holy and lovely God.

Based on the interview with Munkkiniemi youth coordinator, most youths attend the confirmation training and leadership training but since most youths leave their cities for studies and other works of life, there is no strong bond for continuity of youth work and youths find themselves missing in the church except in situations that they get engaged in the city council youth work or university youth club if not they are seen back in the church only after having children in the children and family work..

Before Finland got its independence, the church took responsibility for the national educational system of Christian customs among Finns and instituted the confirmation training in which the church act stipulated that in order to get married it was necessary to undertake Holy Communion which could only be given after confirmation training and confirmation. After Finland got its independence from Russia and as a result of the freedom of religion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church has independently regulated its administrative policy, allowing confirmation as a precondition for church wedding, burial and being a god parent (Innanen, Niemelä and Porkka 2010: 140.) This policy has influence youth participation in the church because most people want to be married, be God parent and be buried in the church.

3.1.2 The confirmation training

⁵Confirmation is the affirmation of faith after concluding confirmation classes, in which the confirmed has the right to participate independently in the Holy Communion. Rippikoululeiri in Finnish is literally translated as the confession school camp in the confirmation classes, basics of Christian faith and community in to which one was

⁵ Markku Antola, Marketta & et el in “To be a Christian in Finland” (2006) also affirms confirmation class relevant for all Finnish youths from fifteen years in page 6.

baptized as a baby are taught and in Finland the age for confirmation classes is fifteen years. During the confirmation training period, youth are obliged to attend church service; assist in church service in a recorded number of times. The confirmation classes is a big institution in the Evangelical Lutheran Church and every year about 2000 young people participate in confirmation group and leadership training which is the biggest voluntary work. People seldom speak of confirmation in the public in Finland. One can participate in Holy Communion only after attending the confirmation training which is considered as the first confession of sins and been confirmed actually (Innanen, Niemelä and Porkka 2010:139-142).

Confirmation training in Finland is partly youth culture where young people are happy to participate in for the eligibility for marriage, been a god parent, burial and socialisation reasons.

The freedom of religion act accepted in Finland in 2003 changed the status of religious education in schools where pupil had the right to receive the teachings of their own religion with curriculum slightly different from the other but the 13 accepted curricula are based on the need of the civil society. A survey conducted in 2004 involving church employees reveals that confirmation work, baptism and funerals are the most important field of work in the church ((Innanen, Niemelä and Porkka 2010:144.)

One relevant question to be answered is; what happens after confirmation which is relevant for my research. After confirmation, those interested in parish activity work as volunteers in church youth work and the main duties of these volunteers is to work as assistance leaders in upcoming confirmation camps or in children and youth work units. Youths are empowered through this voluntary work. In every confirmation training, about a third or fourth participants engages in this group leadership course. It is an essential part of the church and is a church culture in Finland to serve as a group leader which is important but when they reach twenty years, it becomes difficult to cope with these activities because more often they have to move to different cities for studies and are force to leave their home parishes.

3.2 The structure of Mikael Agricola parish

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland has a hierarchical structure with the synod been the highest body, followed by the bishop, church council, diocese and parish council. Agricola Church hierarchical hierarchy begin at the parish council with Pastor Matti Poutianen being the parish council head (Kirkkoherra) with sixteen parish council members for a period of four years elected by the parish members from 2011-2014. The parish council elects the church employees and plan parish finance and meet once a month.

Mikael Agricola Church has a hierarchical or line organization structure with twelve managing team (Johtoryhmä) made up of the chaplain, church music, diaconal work, child and family work, youth work, adult work by the priest, porters and other administrative offices like the secretary and so on.

Mikael Agricola has a boss (Hallinto) who manages the affairs of the church in collaboration with the parish council and this department is in charge of customers' services, finance and information or communication. Gods Service workers are 32 (Jumalan palveluselämä) and work hand in hand with the administrative board (Kirkko Helsingissä).

3.2.1 Role of Mikael Agricola parish

Agricola parish as part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church offers baptism, wedding ceremonies and funerals. Other activities include, music clubs for toddler from 0-6 years of age , Child and family work (Lapsi ja Perhetyö) which involved day clubs for children aged 3-6 years, developmental and creative culture, songs, play and craft work on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Friday from 09-1200 at 100euro cost. The youth work department (Nuorisotyö) is in charge of youth work. This department has different groups such as children between 6-14 years (Varhais-nuorisotyö) or school age children who participate in cost free clubs, various excursions, patrol, and camp events, Fifteen years old youths (Rippikoulutyö) undertake confirmation classes and

Adult work with the priest Aikuistyö has different groups it operates with adult work and projects in small group (Aikuistyö pienryhmat ja projektit, mission work (Lähetystyo), friendship parish work (Ystävyyssurakuntatyö) and young adult (Nuoret aikuiset). Young adults participate in bazaars, café, gym, prayers, summer camps and participate in diaconal work taking charge of social work. The Music depart is made up of seven organists who are in charge of church music (Johtava Kirkkomusikko). And finally the church services department (Kirkonpalvelutyö) which include the porter services (Ylivahtimesteri) take charge of other services. (Kirkko Helsingissä).

Mikael Agricola congregation takes charge of the youths activities even though it is runned by the priest and the youth coordinators.

3.2.2 Youths participation in Mikael Agricola Church

Based on the youth's interview, the age range of youths who attend the Wednesday service from 20:00-22:00 in Mikael Agricola Church is from 15-25 years. There is the present of music animating team composed of youths. Youths are mostly involved in the youths evening on Thursdays, confirmation camps, music evening, team leader training on Wednesday, football team on Fridays, children clubs (7-12), home groups which became operational on the 21 February 2012.

Youths also mentioned in their interview that their activities are not unique, even though they follow some common programmes like confirmation training, Wednesday service, team leader training for those involves but some participate in other activities like football, music team, volunteering in arranging the altar, lead children clubs for children from seven – twelve year with a token of twenty Euros.

Youth's participation depends on the individual involvement. Some focus only on the Wednesday service and camp meetings while others are involved in music, technical events, football, and arranging the altar and taking care of children in club meetings.

Youth's evenings involve playing table board games, drinking tea and coffee, socialisation place for students, bible study which last for half an hour and confirmation camp, Friday music evening is a little bit more for young adult.

Based on the youth interview, some youths in Agricola takes care of children in the club meeting in which they are given a token of twenty Euros a month just to encourage them. Just the work experience the youths are getting out of these act is essential in their life and for the growth of the church especially now that the church is having a drop in paid personnel's because most people are leaving the church.

Based on the interview with the youth coordinators, the confirmation training at Agricola church actually lasts for one week study period and the camp takes place in spring. After the camp, the youths are obliged to participate in the activities of the church. A booklet with signatories is created where the youths needs to sign five time to confirm their service attendance and five possible youth's evenings. This is quite different from other congregations like in his home based congregation where one has to collect those signatures before going to the confirmation camp. He thinks it is better this way because after the confirmation camp you know something already about things, and one is able to make friends and can go with the evenings. So it is a more natural way to get involved. The youth coordinator thinks their parish is a place where people come and meet people aspiring God and you know this is their spiritual home. When people come and do not understand this spiritual language which is so different, they are taught what is to be done and why it is done this way.

3.2.3 Church policy towards youth work at Mikael Agricola congregation.

Agricola church does not have a policy towards youth work as a whole but does have expectations on spiritual guardians or teaching which encourages the youths to attend Sunday and Wednesday worship services. The coordinators plan events such as the

Wednesday service, confirmation training camps, leadership camps, Friday music evening and so on.

Based on the interviews with the coordinator and youth leaders of Mikael Agricola Church, youths are encouraged to attend Wednesday services in order to empower their spiritual needs. Youths have different needs and different families also have different needs and the youths do not have the same needs as other parishes thus their policies are different. One special thing about Mikael Agricola congregation is that the Christians are not always from this area. Teenagers are mainly from this area but young adults are from other areas. The young adults come from this region since they are mostly students who study in this area since there are three schools.

According to the coordinators, the nature of Wednesday service has attracted many youths in the past three years with an average of 230 youths as compared to maximum of 23 youths over the previous ten years. Youth participation has been influenced by several factors. The youth coordinator has been there for about thirteen years and the youths' relations have participated in youth work and have given recommendations to their younger ones, the priest has Baptist most of them so the workers are familiar to the families and have developed trust.

Based on the interview with the youths, Agricola Wednesday service is quite unique and youths are given a quiet moment during the service to share their worries with someone else usually some prayer leaders or pray quietly, which gives them a feeling they cannot get anywhere else.

More visiting priests share the word of God, so preaching is not done by the youths themselves.

Offerings are collected for humanitarian purposes for those in need abroad or in Finland and food stuffs are sometime given to students who are in need.

Everyone is welcome to the Wednesday service and today people above thirty years are worshipping in the Wednesday service. The actual age range for youth's activities is from fifteen to twenty five with the exception of Wednesday youth service with no age limit.

Nowadays people above twenty five years attend the worship service because everyone is free to serve God.

3.2.4 Factors influencing youth participation in Mikael Agricola Church.

Based on youths' interviews, the main factors which have influenced youths participation in Agricola has been friends .Agricola environment has a unique feeling one cannot get from else were. The leaders are open minded making the atmosphere welcoming and unique.

The camp meeting attracts the youths also because they usually have wonderful time with their friends, relax and read the bible even though they go there for fun. They usually have about six camp meetings a year.

The youths also acknowledged the fact that the modern nature of the Wednesday service in Agricola with good music has been the main push factor for the increasing number of youth removing the believe of the old traditional notion about church service. The youth appreciate the manner in which the coordinator welcomes everyone at the entrance and at the end of the service by a hand shake at the way out and coffee and tea offered to those who want.

More immigrants worship in the Wednesday service with English flyers on the main issues handed to them and also projection as in the flyers for those who do not understand Finnish. The camps meetings are also influential forces.

Based on the youth interview, they believe the society have a way they perceive people who go to church and think it is only about hallelujah but that not true. Many youths accepted the fact that the image people have concerning the church is quite different from what actually takes place. Some youths acknowledged that music was the main thing which took them to church but in the course worshiping in church in order to listen to music, they have been more inclined to God than the music they taught. Our desire is to spread the word so that more and more people have the opportunity to come to church and see for themselves.

Based on the interview with the coordinator, all religion is corrupted by the media and people turn to be individualistic. Helsinki sanomat is the biggest influence to the youths in relation to a negative attitude towards the church. Most people believe in the media and any simple happening can be so complex when analyse through a media. The media is mostly based on science. Agricola youths were not affected by the ⁶TV show on same sex marriages. Sexuality has never been an issue in Agricola.

3.2.5 Vision of youth work in Agricola Church

The youth coordinators' vision of youth work at Agricola Church is to get the youths involved in the bible and grow spiritually. The next question is how can this be achieved? With the increasing number of Wednesday service attendees without knowing their motives, the Agricola youth leaders thought it wise to have a session with the youth 14 February 2012 to enquire their motives for coming so that the area of their needs may be strengthen, but unfortunately the turnover was so poor but at least some needs were raised such as the formation of home group meetings and a youth offered a place for the first meeting to be held. The youths who were willing to begin the group opened a face book group page for information flow but that group has not been increasing in the number but there is still hope in the future because it took quite a long time for the Wednesday service to be what it is today.

Youths at Agricola Church have a positive vision for the growth of the church, and see the environment as a place where everyone is welcome and since the workers are welcoming and interactive.

⁶ Details on the consequences of a TV show in the membership of Evangelical Lutheran Church Christians in Finland can be seen in Aalto, Anni 2010 article.

The Wednesday service has been a pull factor where youths have had an opportunity to socialise and hear the word of God at the same time the increasing turn out indicate and active social network

3.2.6 Challenges faced by youths in Mikael Agricola Church

Based on youth interviews, the youth are faced with the challenge of having mixed feelings about the world and also with the problem of believing in God or science been taught in school.

Youths also have the problem of sexuality because they are growing in a culture with values on sexuality and since they are growing up to become men and women they find it hard to find their own way of thinking and do not know how to base their mind since everything is open and there is no right or wrong. There is no good philosophy in the world and many people are so frustrated because of different concept of liberalism, conservatism and so on.

3.3 Recommendations for youth work in Agricola

The youths recommended that the right image of the church should be portrayed in the community because many people have different views about the church and the old fashioned modality of service should be transformed like the Wednesday service which is so lively in other congregations. Most youths had a different view about the church and came to realise the difference only after worshiping in the youth service which has not been the way they taught. The community should be sensitised about the church because most people still belief the different school of taught from the media be it conservative or liberal ideas and do have the notion that the church is just a hallelujah thing which is boring. People should begin to focus on the word of God and read the bible to gain knowledge. One important thing about the youth service is that it gives a

different picture because the picture people have about service is sitting on a bench with old people and everything boring. One good thing in Agricola service is that the service and the religious life is focus more to the people's life and culture such that we protect their tradition and care more about the evolving society.

The youth coordinator, recommended more focus on spiritual growth and a way of explaining the spirit world to the youths because most of them do not understand when God is calling them so there should be greater spiritual touch on God's calling because some youths have had such feeling in their heart and instead consulted the doctor in which they have been on pills medication which did not do any good to them but as most of them turn to follow the things of God they have realised that it was God calling them. It will be good for emphasis to be made on how the Holy Spirit administers to Christians. The coordinators intend to open bible reading group in 2012.

3.4 The structure of Munkkiniemi Church

Munkkiniemi parish church was completed in 1954 and designed by architect Paul Salomaa. Based on the interview with the youth coordinator, Munkkiniemi is a parish in the Helsinki forming a coalition known as seurakunayhtymä and each local congregation has their own board called Seurakunta neuvosto. Member of Munkkiniemi elect their board after every five years. Board members make decisions on work, activities and projects in the congregation. Two members of Munkkiniemi are in the Seurakuntayhtymä board. Tax money goes to the main board (Seurakuntayhtymä) in Helsinki and they make the final decision on basic of work in each congregation. Munkkiniemi local board members then decide on how to use the money.

Munkkiniemi parish has the regular Sunday service which is mostly made up of old people and Wednesday youths meetings which is one of the main activities for the youths apart from the confirmation training classes.

Munkkiniemi congregation have children and family work, youth work which include confirmation training, diaconal work, mission abroad and international diaconal work. Children work can be seen in different groups, for example, children under school age 0-7, work with school age (7-18) and young adult 18-25 year still in the developmental process (Kirkko Helsingissä).

Children from 3-5 have their day club where they meet two –three times a week and focus on child care the joy of a childhood and spiritual nurturing of a child which enables the child to develop church experiences (Kirkko Helsingissä).

Family clubs is a forum where parent and children meet in the same group which involves family devotional, singing and playing together in harmony. This forum also enables Christian educational support.

Munkkiniemi organises club activities for school children in cooperation with the city of Helsinki education department.

The diaconal area involves several ages especially working with old people but each age group has a team leader. The youth leaders were made up of the youth coordinator, two pastors and a musician team (Kirkko Helsingissä).

Based on the interview with the youth coordinator, at the beginning of 2011, two congregations, Munkkiniemi and Munkkivuori merged together into one parish called Munkkiniemi. In Helsinki there have had six congregations joined in order to have a bigger and more effective congregation. But now Munkkiniemi have a little more people working as full time and have about twelve thousand members in this area who are going to church and this area is special when we compare it with other parts of Helsinki as they have the highest percent for those who belong to church. Munkkiniemi has a lot of wealthy people living in the area and very special in this congregation is that there are a lot of old people of over 30% of those who are above 65 and that is why there are few young people .

3.4.1 The role of Munkkiniemi in youth work

The Munkkiniemi congregation has full authority over the youths because the youth leader is a full time worker of the Evangelical Lutheran church. The officiating team leaders comprise of the priest and youth coordinator. The congregation take charge of Baptism, confirmation, marriage, burial and other Christian rites entitle to membership. The youths have their actives coordinated by the youth leader but the youth are not solely part of the Sunday services. They can be assigned duties during their confirmation training period but are not oblige to participate or worship during the Sunday service. The youths are more inclined to their Wednesday group meetings, camps and part take in events that concerns them.

3.4.2 Youths participation in Munkkiniemi Church

The age range is from fifteen to nineteen years. Based on interview of the youth coordinator, the youths participate in their weekly meetings on Wednesdays as from 18-21.00. The first one hour thirty minutes is always officiated by a planned programme. They follow weekly themes from two books published by Nuorten keskus. One of the books covers the church year from advent to the last Sunday of the year but the person responsible for the meeting decide whether to follow it or not. The other book does not follow the church year calendar but is more variable and comprise nature, environment, and peace, sex and so on. The official programme comprises, a short bible story, and maybe singing and then goes to a small chapel which is more relaxing and sometime light prayer candles, listen to someone who may like to tell a story or do something, or listen to music and at times have a silence moment and take coffee, tea and snacks.

Based on youth interviews, youths in Munkkiniemi congregation sometime organises Wednesday special service in which the youths participate in most activities because they seldom attend Sunday service which they considered as service for old people. The youths also organise events on Saturdays involving music, bible reading, lecture and coffee even though it is not restricted only for youth but majority of attendees are youths.

Some youths have had training in participating in Sunday service for example reading the lesson and also to help in the Holy Communion. There has to be a pastor to lead the Holy Communion, but the others serving there can be workers or volunteers.

Based on youth's interview, confirmation training is also important for youth work. Youths also participate in leadership training for confirmation camps. Overall participants for camp meetings are from forty to fifty and these camp meetings usually take place once in two months on weekends. Leadership training camps are common during summer. Some youths are so excited about the confirmation camp and they keep on attending camp meetings over and over again.

Youths do not really have any task to accomplish in the parish itself but are free to go there whenever they want but it's not obligatory.

Bazaars are some time organised in which the youths participate in.

Recently, a youth has been elected to work in the council board called Ruuti. This youth has been an active member in the Munkkiniemi parish for five years. Ruuti board members go to the city board and gives suggestions to those running the city.

3.4.3 Church policy towards youth work at Munkkiniemi congregation

Based on the youth coordinators interviews, Munkkiniemi does not have any specific youth policy but do have administrative bureau known in Finnish as seurankunta neuvonto which take care of the whole church. The youths do have an annual plan for the local congregations with goals and actions for one or few years at local level. At the national level, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland has several policy

documents; one is for work among children and youth. Participation was one of the focuses during this year (2011). There is also a theme for three years “The Holy”. This is the second year of the Holy as focus. During “The Holy” years we try to encourage people to attend Sunday services. The Church policy influences youth’s participation to an extent because youths activities are not suppose to be centrally to church norms.

The youths in Agricola were not aware of any church policy and only spoke of rules which abide discipline. The youths also acknowledged the fact that only the youth movement at the city council have some policies which they are not verse with.

3.4.4 Vision of youth work in Munkkiniemi congregation

Based on youth’s interviews, the vision for youth work in Munkkiniemi congregation is for continuity of youth work in the future. Some youths have decided to do an internship for nine months rather than going to the army which may enable them also get a job in the church which is quite positive. And there has been an increased in the number of attendees in youth camps from about fifteen in the past to approximately forty to fifty youth’s participants during summer. The average participants in camp meetings have been thirty to forty

According to the youth coordinator, there is a positive vision for youth work in Munkkiniemi, because a youth have been elected in the council election which is positive, as she will be part of the decision making body which may present youths challenge for a way forward.

3.4.5 Factors influencing youth's participation in Munkkiniemi congregation.

Based on youth interviews, Socialization motives has been an influential factor attributing to youths participation in the church because they turn to meet the friends ,relax take coffee and sometime have a quiet moment.

Friends have been a pull factor for youth's participation in the Wednesday service. Other points of interest have been music for those interested in the music team while other just wants to have a quiet moment with their friends.

The confirmation training is also culture that youths want to be part of it so that they can get married in the church, be god parents and can be buried by the church so about 90% of youths in Finland attend the confirmation training.

The youths affirmed that the media has also influenced youth's participation through the church magazine which gives them information about the church and some upcoming events. The internet through face book network has been an attractive forum where youths make new friend and see upcoming events and easy community among the youths and their leaders too.

Camp meeting has been a motivating factor for youth work. Some youths enjoy camp meeting which instigates them to attend over and over and some youth have the opportunity to preach during camp meeting even though it is mostly done by the priest but the youths really have fun make new friends, relax and feel good.

The youth leaders has been an influential factor for youths active participation in the church because some youth get recommendations from older attendees be it friends or relatives.

On the other hand, there are factors which have influence the non-participation of youths based on the youth interviews conducted. Many youths are not interested in worshipping during Sunday service because the services are full of older people and there are no activities for the working population.

Youths leave their home congregations to different cities for study and most find it hard to link up to other congregations. Some finally get engage in some university youth group while other just gets lost.

3.5 Recommendations for youth work in Munkkiniemi

Based on the youth's interview, the church should create a link from childhood to adulthood so that people can grow spiritually because there is that missing link of youth above nineteen years. Some youths are interested to continue but do not find a place because of age barrier and some find themselves in the church only when they have kids and bring them for children programme but they themselves do not have anything to engage to. Some youths above eighteen years still do have interest in continuity but they do not find their place in the group because of their age which made thinking of creating another group but the problem has been getting more youths of their age involved.

The youths also recommended that more adverts and open events activities should be schedule during summer in an open area with music involve order to attract youths walking nearby.

The youths also recommended that more time schedule for bible reading and music should be allocated during Wednesday meeting for those interested.

Based on the interview with the coordinator, regarding the shortage of paid personnel's in the church since many people are leaving the church today, youths should be trained to be able to run most events rather than leaving it in the hands of paid personnel's.

The shortage of church members can be explained after a Finnish broadcasting company televised a panel discussion on gender neutral marriages and the right to homosexuals in general in October 2010. Participants included parliamentarians, church officials and public gay. The church representative related negative religious views about homosexuality which resulted to a sudden influx of approximately 30.000 people resigning from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland with an average number of about 1000 a week. This event has affected the church which depends on taxes from its members which has resulted to a drop in paid personnel's in the church. On the other hand, in contrast of the resignation of members from the church, Päivi Räsänen comment about homosexuality from her religious point of view brought in 400

members in to the church and still in march 2010 a questionnaire was conducted among 200 parliamentarians about same sex rights with a 54 percent vote against and 46 percent for (Aalto, Anni 2010).

4. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CAMEROON

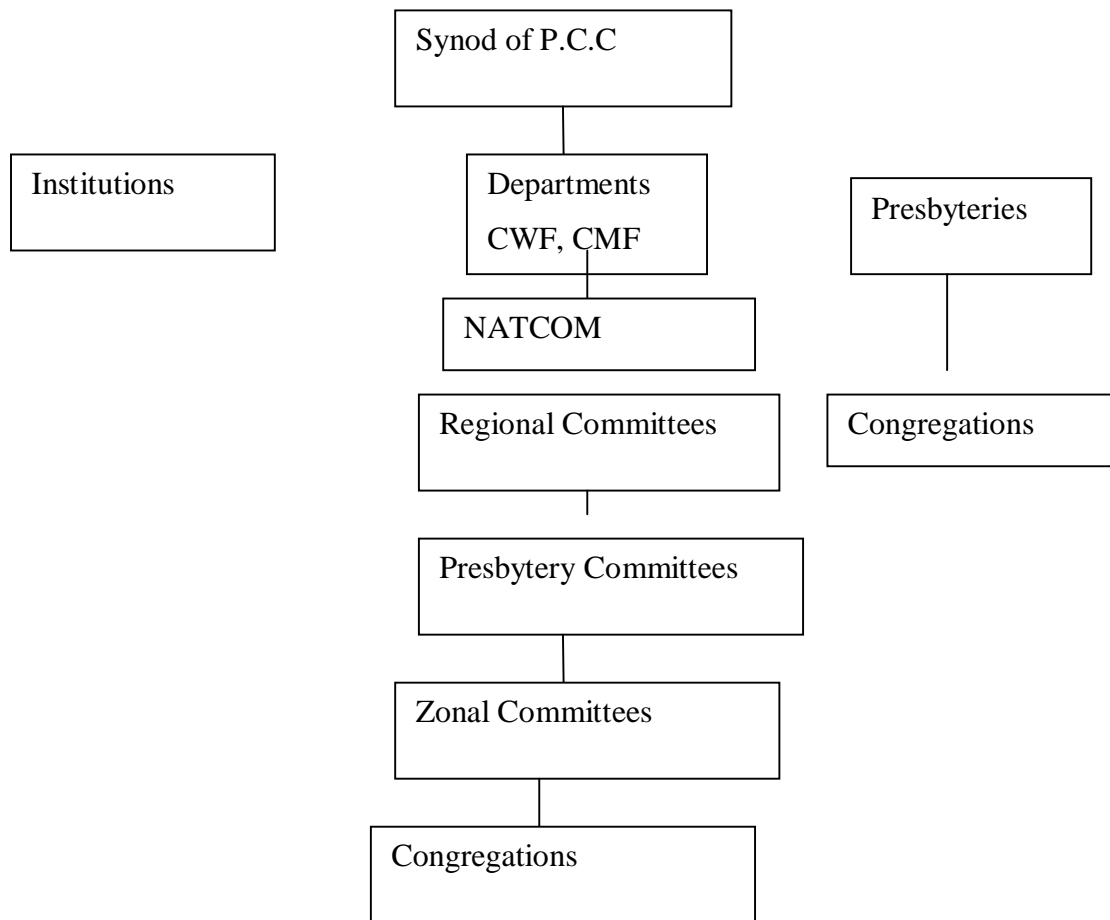
The English Baptist Church came to West Africa in 1845 when the Germans took control over the territory. The conference of European missionary societies agreed that the Basel Mission should take over the work of the English Baptist Mission in 1886. Today's Presbyterian Church is one of the Protestant Churches and a successor to the Basel Mission Church, established in 1886, and the church gained independence on November 13th, 1957 as Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (P.C.C). Presbyterian Church in Cameroon runs three general hospitals, rehabilitation centers, eighteen health centers, ophthalmological unit, a university, theological seminaries, secondary, primary and nursery institutions and centre for agriculture and employment training (Keller 1969:98)

Presbyterian Church covers two areas, the forest and grass field area with Mungaka (Bali) and Douala respectively, English and French are also official languages used in church.

Presbyterian Church is an autonomous body with the moderator as the main governing authority followed by the synod clerk, secretary, financial secretary and board members. The moderator is the spiritual and executive head of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. The moderator has a five year term of office renewable once. The Presbyterian Church has a triangular structure comprising of three main organs the congregations, the presbyteries and the synod (Keller 1969: 97)

Table 2.

The structure of Presbyterian Church in Cameroon



The local congregation is a spiritual assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. The believers come together to fellowship, dedicated for the teaching of the Holy Scripture. Membership of a local congregation consists of Christians who have affirmed their faith in baptism and submit to the discipline of the church. The local congregation can be

recognized by written authorization of the moderator based on the decision of the synod committee (The constitution 1998: 12). The local congregation is the basic unit and at the same time expresses the universal church of Christ at its locality.

The congregations are small parishes headed by a pastor, congregational chairman and the session which is a committee of elders elected by congregational members. Congregations have a quarterly meeting where issues about the congregation are discussed and may have several meetings as situation demands. Congregational meetings shall be convened by the chairman in consultation with the pastor in charge.

The local congregation in a certain geographical locality forms a district and there are sixteen districts with over one thousand congregations. The constitution of the church defines three legislative bodies namely, the congregational meeting, the presbytery and the synod (Cons11 §21, §30§45) with constitutional powers to make decisions on their respective levels (Journey of faith 1982:123).

The presbyteries are congregation in a geographical region. Each presbytery has a chairman, treasurer and secretary in charge of administrative issues of that presbytery. Presbyteries of church include, Bafut-Tuba, Mamfe, Akwaya, Kumba, Bui, Donga Matung, Bakossi, Batibo, Dikombe, East Mungo north, East Mungo south, Fako north, Fako South, Meme north /Meme south, Ndian, Mezam, Menchum-Boyo, Njika, Santa, and Ngie (Keller 1969: 97).

The synod is the supreme governing body of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. The synod office is located in Buea, the head quarter of southwest province. The synod comprises of the office of the moderator who is elected, synod clerk (elected) financial secretary appointed official, 2 elders elected from each presbytery where one must be the chairperson of the presbytery and the other a woman, 2 youth representatives elected by the national committee for youth work, 2 C.M.F represented by the national committee of men work, 2 C.W.F representative elected by the national committee of women work, 1 health service representative elected by the health service board, 2 Presbyterian education authority (PEA) representative elected by the PEA, 1 representative from each missionary area appointed by the missionary council, 1

representative of rural development board elected by the board. Elected members of the synod shall have a five years term of office and shall be eligible for election once. And elected member shall not be represented by any person at synod meeting (The Constitution 1998:28).

The administrative head of the synod is the synod clerk. The synod is an open assembly of representatives from the presbytery, church institution and departments.

The synod is made up of representatives from all the districts from the church elected by the presbytery. The synod meets once a year but can hold extra ordinary meetings if needs arises as stated in the church constitution in §49. And its decisions are guided by the word of God and the constitution of the church. Thus the synod is concerned for the spiritual building of the whole church spreading the gospel within and beyond its region and offering services to the society through its institutions and various branches of work. The synod has an oversight of the whole church and deliberates on all matters concerning the doctrine, worship, discipline and organization in all legislation as stated in the constitution in § 51 and 52. The synod committee coordinates the work of all the committees and boards of the synod and proposes policy matters to the synod which takes decision on them and also report all activities to the synod for approval (Journey of faith 1982: 124). The synod committee meets quarterly and takes action on behalf of the synod and may meet in closed session when it deem it necessary.

The Church has several departments such as women's work department, health, education, communication department, and youth work department, department for men work, Presbyterian printing press, and Presbyterian bookshop and so on.

One can say that youth work of the PCC dates as far back as the first congregation, as each congregation established a children's service called Sunday school.

This unorganized service continued without changes until the early 1950s when Mr Thomas N Amaze now Rev Amaze became travelling Sunday school uncle in the grass field area. The Basel Mission decided to train two part time pastors Rev Ayongwa and Rev Dosa Etic in Akwa to focus on Sunday school work. From this humble beginning evolved what is known today as Christian youth fellowship (CYF) and its younger

branch the young Presbyterians (YP). Sunday school work has been the basis of church grounds for youth work. Sunday school could no longer satisfy the spiritual needs of young Christian entering secondary schools. The challenges called for new methods of preaching the gospel to an ever increasing youthful population. The Rev. Ulrich Bachmann, and then Pastor of Victoria (now Limbe) introduced a fellowship of Youths (FOY) in 1957 (Journey of faith 1982: 44-45).

However, it was on 5th September 1959 in Mutengene, near Victoria that the Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) was actually formed with the Rev Mose Fondo and Rev Albert Miaz with representatives from Victoria, Bota, Tiko, Mutengene, Ekona and Buea with the motto, 'Towards a perfect man and the aim was to bring youths together who desire to serve their lord Jesus Christ. Rev Miaz became the first youth secretary in 1959 (Journey of faith 1982: 44-45.)

With the setting apart of Rev Albert Miaz as full time secretary in 1965, youth work was encouraged and the Christian youth fellowship was inaugurated and groups were established in many congregations and in 1967 there were over 150 groups. By 1964 a constitution had accepted by the general synod and the movement had been registered with the federation ministry of national education, youth and culture and was a member of the national committee of youth, sports and popular education of Cameroon.

The Christian youth fellowship gathered young people between 15 and 35 years. Groups met for regional rallies; local groups devoted for bible study, discussion, games, evangelical work and occasionally had social work (Keller 1969: 133.)

4.1 Presbyterian Church policy towards youth work

The creation of the department of youth affairs and the national Sunday school office was geared towards youth work in the Church. The youth department is headed by the youth secretary with the head quarter in Kumba a town in south west province in Cameroon. These departments' works hand in hand for the spiritual growth which can

be traced from childhood through a solid foundation from Sunday school, ⁷Young Presbyterians (Y.P) to Christian youth fellowship (CYF). Materials are produced in such a way as to match the changing society and the age of the child. Policies are made in order to match with the needs of the evolving society even though all needs cannot be satisfied. Today, emphasis are been laid to the youth department because they are the future leaders of tomorrow. All the units are linked to together in order to build a strong Christian faith from their study materials. Sunday school and Y.P teachers are usually present C.Y.F members or people who have been members of C.Y.F movement in the past.

The activities of these groups are unique in all Presbyterian congregations in Cameroon.

Sunday school and Y.P head office take charge of their yearly study materials which are in line with the norms of the church while the youth department focuses on the yearly youth splash (Christian youth fellowship study manual) which is used in all the CYF movements in Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. This youth splash contains biblical study material for the spiritual growth of Christian faith, social and health education, and economical knowledge for youth's empowerment. Groups are assessed in their zonal, presbytery and national rally competitions and prizes are awarded to groups who performed well. The selected groups in different zones are allowed to participate in presbytery rallies and best performances are selected for national rally competition. This has been a motivating factor for groups to cover their yearly materials because these rallies comprise bible quiz, singing competition, exhibition of craft work and sport. Bible quiz carries a greater percentage of the overall grading in the competition.

Based on the youth's interview, the recent decision of electing a youth as an elder in every congregation has been a positive aspect of church policy towards youth work because youths voices are been heard in session meetings. Every congregation have

⁷ C.Y.F refers to Christian youth's fellowship, Y.P refers to young Presbyterians and SUS refers to Sunday school.

meetings and the resolutions from those meeting are presented in quarterly congregational meetings which are sent to the synod office for final decision for the growth of the church.

Based on the youth's interview, the decision taken by the Synod to limit the CYF membership participation to twenty-five years has been greatly criticised by members who are still interested in youth work. The initial idea has been for those above twenty five to join the Christian men fellowship (C.M.F) which is under the men's department whose activities are similar to the CYF movement but in a more matured way. Some member above the stipulated age are not interested in leaving youth movement and the overall turn out has dropped due to that decision.

4.1.1. Confirmation training

Confirmation training and baptism are not prerequisite for admission in to C.Y.F movement. Presbyterian Church encourages infant and adult baptism. Infant baptism takes place when a child is baptised at infancy while adult baptism is a combination of baptism and confirmation rite done at the time after a person must have undertake a doctrine class of three to six months based on basic teaching of the church. Some people have been members of CYF before been confirmed. Those who under took infant baptism must attend those doctrine classes before they are confirmed. The confirmation ceremony is usually a big celebration where Christian takes an oath to serve God in front of the entire congregation usually on Sunday service. It is only after these rites are performed that Christians have the right to participate in the lord's super otherwise known as Holy Communion. There is no specific age range for confirmation training. Christians are welcome if they see it necessary to follow Christian doctrine by accepting Jesus as the lord and saviour through baptism rites.

4.2 The Christian Youth Fellowship (C.Y.F) of Presbyterian Church

The aim of the movement is to bring together young men and women who want to serve Jesus Christ as their only lord and saviour and to develop among its members a sense of responsibility towards the church and her mission in the world. This is the promise of C.Y.F till date (Book of order 1995: 67).

Membership of C.Y.F is open to youths who have been baptized with water in the name of God the father, the son and Holy Spirit and to those who are willing to be led to Jesus Christ through the ministry of the group and the church (Book of order 1995:67.)

Members of CYF on admission promise to seek under the leadership of Christ and in fellowship with one another, the will of God for themselves, for the church and for the world and to do it. It was therefore to bring youths together, who desire to serve their lord Jesus Christ, the development among its members a sense of responsibility towards the church and her mission to the world.

At admission service in church where they are been handed their membership card which gives them the right to wear the uniform and the badge and they are called upon to put their faith in to practice. Admission of new members takes place after they have attended group meetings regularly for six months and their motto is “Live in fellowship with Christ” (Book of order 1995: 67.)

The object of the Presbyterian youth department is to direct youths towards Christ, to bring together youths of the church towards Christ, to promote self reliance among youths and to carry the work of God to hinder land where the gospel has reached.

All member of the C.Y.F are entitled to wear a uniform during official ceremonies which involves their participation. Members are handed their membership badge and card after probation of six months in which they are officially dedicated in front of the

whole congregation by taking an oath through their promise and their aim which is a symbol of acceptance. The girls are supposed to wear a white blouse, black skirt, black shoe, a red cap with the C.Y.F logo on it and a badge while the boys wear a white long sleeve shirt, black trouser, black shoes, black tie, a blue cap with the C.Y.F logo on it and a badge.

C.Y.F is today one of the three basic organs or departments of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. The other two movements are the Christian Women Fellowship (C.W.F), and Christian men fellowship (C.M.F). The youths were the first to be established as an organized structure in 1959.

The Youth Department in the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon now consists of C.Y.F, Young Presbyterians, and of course Sunday School (SUS). These three units are present in all the congregations.

As stated earlier in the structure of Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, C.Y.F is structured almost same as the main church with groups at the level of the local congregation.

Groups operate at the level of the congregation. C.Y.F group can be approved after members have shown a sense of devotion to follow Christ and have accepted the rules and regulation of C.Y.F movement. The group will be dedicated in the presence of the whole congregation and members will also take an oath in the presence of presbytery officials.

On the decision of the presbytery, a number of nearby groups may form a zone. C.Y.F groups have joint zonal activities which include; social evening or come together, joint evangelisation trips, revival visit for weaker groups, joint workshop and so on. Groups have their zonal rallies annually and the first, second and third groups that excel compete for presbytery rallies.

A presbytery comprises of groups in a given geographical region. Groups within the presbytery have a committee which takes charge of the planning of C.Y.F joint

activities like rallies ,courses, leadership training, workshops, camps delegate meetings and so on. Presbytery organizes annual rallies which comprises of the first, second and third groups selected during zonal rallies.

The presbytery has its executive committee which runs the affairs of the presbytery which comprises of the presbytery president, presbytery secretary, presbyterial secretary, Young Presbyterian section leader, presbytery treasurer and publicity secretary.

The presbytery president organises the work of the committee members and see to it how working the presbytery should be promoted, he gives out duties of the other members, chairs the delegate meetings. He also represents C.Y.F groups in the presbytery and presbytery committee and also presents the presbytery in the national committee. He keeps the presbytery secretary informed on all corresponded and signs all official documents of the presbytery. He maintains good contact with all the groups and keeps the youth department informed about the needs of the presbytery (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 80)

Presbytery elections are conducted in November after groups have conducted their election. The elections are conducted by the Presbyterian secretary or his / her representative. Only active groups are entitled to participate. All the zones must be represented in the election.

The presbytery secretary acts as president in his absence and keeps all the records of the presbytery. The secretary is in charge of dispatching all mails to the groups and youth splashes. He/ she is responsible for directing information to all the groups (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 80)

The Presbyterian secretary is the spiritual adviser to the presbytery committee who is the head of all the pastors in a given presbytery. He is responsible for solving conflicts arising within groups in the presbytery (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 80).

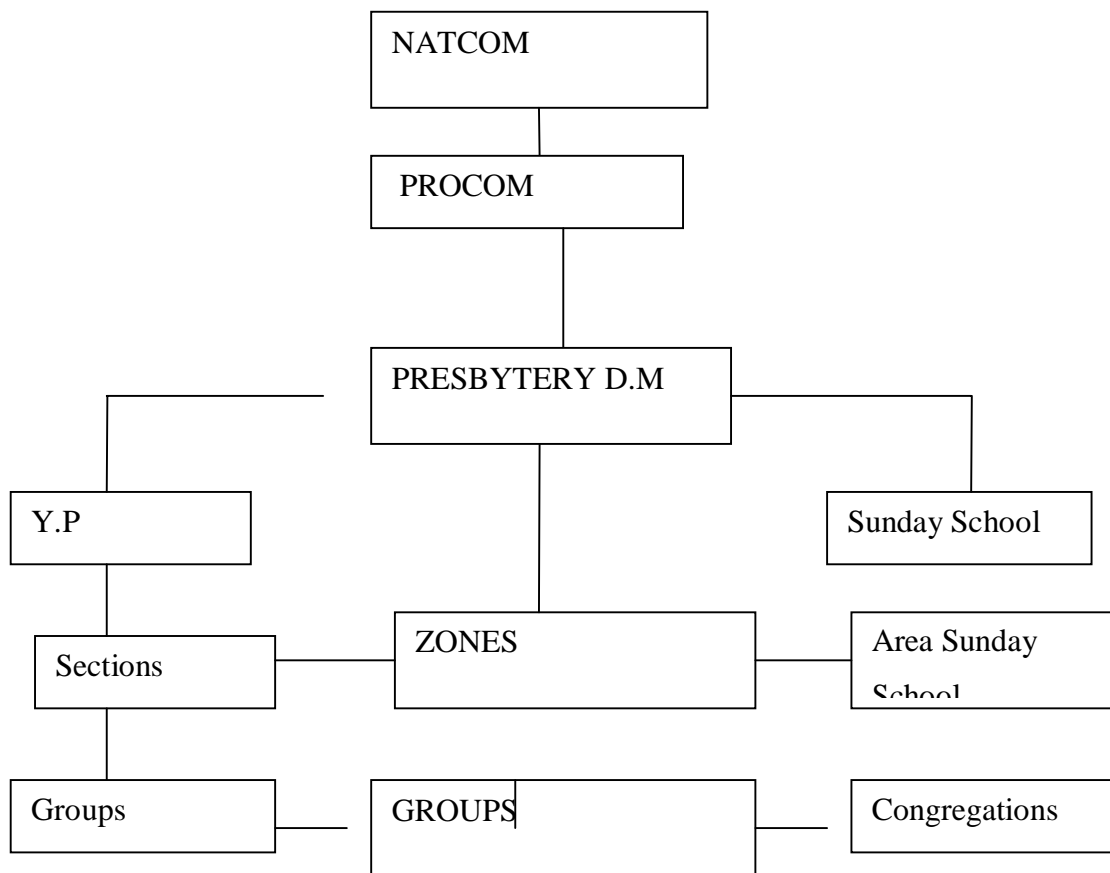
C.Y.F and Y.P have their own national assembly called the national committee (NATCOM). All presbyteries are represented by their presbytery president and NATCOM decides on common policies for C.Y.F groups such as rally programmes and leadership courses and also takes charge of how annual fees are used. Presbytery presidents' present issues relating to their presbyteries and important decisions are passed on to the committee of ministry for confirmation by the synod.

At the provincial level, the provincial committee (PROCOM) take charge of all youth activities at the provincial level while the presbytery department takes charge of all C.Y.F, Y.P and S.U.S groups in their congregations, and also the activities of C.Y.F in the zones constituting rallies and meetings.

The presbytery delegate meeting is the parliament of C.Y.F which meets four times a year to discuss the affairs of C.Y.F. C.Y.F groups are supposed to send two representatives been a boy and a girl. In the delegate meetings, groups' sends report and decision about finances and common activities like rallies and courses are decided during the delegate meetings.

Table 3.

The structure of the youth department of Presbyterian Church, Cameroon



(Lecture presented by Vincent Forbete of the youth's department.)

Youth work begins from the Sunday school (S.U.S) level where children from two to ten years are trained in a Christian way through children's bible story lessons and memory verses by their Sunday school teachers and these children always have an annual competition with their friends in other congregations usually called Sunday school rally. During rallies the children usually do singing competition, recite biblical memory verses and sport activities. The congregation provides food for the children and they play together. Results are published and prizes are awarded to groups which performed best.

Young Presbyterians (Y.P) are children basically from 10-15 years who are trained in a similar Christian pattern but more advanced than Sunday school children. They also

have joint Sunday services with the school Sunday children and an annual rally. Their rallies are more practical than that of Sunday school with questions on biblical pictures, singing competition, longer memory verses from bible scriptures and short bible drama. Results are published at the end and prizes are awarded to groups with best performance. The strength of Christian youth fellowship can be stress from the strong foundation established by these young ones and at the age of 15 years they are allowed to join Christian youth fellowship (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 74).

Christian youth fellowship (C.Y.F) forms a group in the congregation and groups from congregations in a region form a zone and the zones form a presbytery from the presbytery comes the national level. The overall leader at the National level is the national youth secretary, who is Rev. Mekumba Francis Ituka.

Based on 2008 census, there are about 825 C.Y.F groups, 668 Y.P groups and 1.073 Sundays in Presbyterian Church in Cameroon.

4.2.1 The structure of Christian youth fellowship movement

The most important person in the group is the group members. Active participation of group members hence advancement of group works. Team work is recommended for the growth of the movement. The C.Y.F has an administration which comprises the president, the girls' representative which acts as the vice president of the group, the secretary, the evangelism secretary, the financial secretary, the publicity secretary, the work secretary, the sport secretary, the social secretary, the music and songs secretary, the treasurer and the discipline master. All these administrative post of responsibility ensures the effective running of the group through the tasks of the various departments (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 76).

The president is the leader of the group who must be a practical example of a follower of Christ. He coordinates the activities of the group in collaboration with the various departments. He represents the entire group in occasions and represents the group to the congregation (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 77).

The girl representative is the vice president of the group. She coordinates the girls in spiritual and moral aspect in their sister corner in such a way that a group is not created within a group. She works in close collaboration with the president and takes full responsibility of the duties of the president in his absence (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 77)

The evangelism secretary enhances spiritual growth of the group. He is like the pastor in the group and is responsible for all the bible study and brain trust lessons in the group. He is also versed with the youth splash and organises the effective study of the youth splash and rally materials and selects who can read, preach or conduct liturgy with the group goes out (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 77)

The secretaries take charge of all group meeting and work related to the secretariat. The secretary works in close collaboration with the president and keeps all the records of the group. He keeps group mails and writes letters to the group. The secretary, president and chairperson drafts the agenda of the day. He writes group reports, keeps attendance records and issues membership card (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 77)

The Financial secretary records all financial transactions of the group such as income and expenditures and prepares financial record at the end of the year. The financial secretary takes charge of annual dues payments for rallies and does group shopping like uniforms and membership cards for members who needs and have paid for the items. The financial secretary work in close collaboration with the treasurer who keeps all group finances (Youth department Presbyterian Church, Cameroon 1998: 77)

The other departments are in charge of their different work forces like the publicity secretary, who takes charge of all public events of the group and feed the group with important events relevant for youth development. The work department connect the group to work related opportunities in order to raise revenue for the group. While the discipline department takes charge of the disciplinary council

Christian youth fellowship weekly activities are same in the whole Presbyterian congregations. C.Y.F members have their weekly meeting which last for two hours or more. In every meeting, there is always an appointed chairperson who takes charge of the meeting on that day. The main goal is for spiritual growth through the study of the youth's splash which contains biblical, social and economic teachings. The members pray together, practice singing since they are always called upon to present songs during Sunday service. Dramas may be rehearsed if there is an upcoming event such as Easter or Christmas because the youths are responsible for events like that.

Based on the youth interviews, C.Y.F activities include participation in rallies ranging from zonal competition and winners compete for presbytery and national level. Activities in such rallies include bible quiz, singing competition, retreat, sport, and exhibition. Winners are given the chance to participate in the other rallies like the Presbytery and national levels in the Presbyterian Church as a whole. Bible study is the key aspect of their activities rather than social gathering arena. Bible quiz has a greater percentage of grades awarded because it is the key aspect.

The role of the youths towards the church is enormous as they constitute not only the church today, but above all the church of tomorrow.

4.3 The history of Limbe, Cameroon.

Victoria was founded by the British missionary Alfred Saker of the Baptist Missionary Society of London in June 1858. Due to this treaty, initially Victoria and its vicinity was

not part of the new German colony Kamerun and remained under British administration. On May 7, 1886 Great Britain and Germany agreed to exchange Victoria and its vicinity for German rights at the Forcados River in Nigeria and St. Lucia in South Africa. On March 28, 1887 Victoria and its vicinity were handed over to the German administration. At the same time Swiss Presbyterian missionaries bought the land from the Baptist Missionary Society in 1887.

Victoria became British again in 1915. In 1982 Victoria was renamed and is since then known as Limbe (Donna 2009a: 2).

The Southwest Province's official language is English, although French is often spoken due to the city's geographic proximity to Douala, where the official language is French. Most of the population speaks Cameroon Pidgin English. The native language of the region is Bakweri.

Limbe is located on a beautiful bay against the backdrop of a major mountain range. Black sand beaches, good sea-bless at most hours of day, and good climate makes Limbe one of two coastal towns (Kribi being the other) that are popular among Western tourists. The Limbe Wildlife Centre and Limbe Botanical Gardens are notable attractions. The Germans left a Bismarck tower in the vicinity of Limbe. Limbe is by far the best region in the country in terms of night life, and is considered the best touristic city in the country to visit. Limbe which is beside the Atlantic Beach is unanimously one of the best cities in the Republic (Donna 2009a:15).

Limbe is served by a terminal station of 600 mm (1 ft 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ in) gauge plantation railway. Limbe is also the center of Cameroon's national oil refinery in French known as *société nationale de raffinage* (SONARA). Other important industries are fishery and tourism. The port of Limbe is one of four commercial ports in Cameroon (Donna 2009b:15.)

In 2008, Limbe became the site of a cement works. The city is also host to the head office (located at Bota, Limbe) of one of Cameroon's largest company known as the Cameroon development cooperation (C.D.C). The head office is at Bota, Limbe. Limbe also has a non-operational natural sea port. Limbe, along with the rest of Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Chad, rely on all import / export activities through the

port of Douala, the economic capital of Cameroon and the city also celebrated its 150th anniversary on December 3rd to 5th 2009 (Donna 2009a:4-5).

4.4 The role of Down Beach Limbe Congregation

Presbyterian Church Down beach Limbe is a parish in the city of Limbe. The first Christian young fellowship movement was created in Victoria. Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe is structured in a similar way as all the other congregation of Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. Based on the interview with the pastor, Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe has a total of 2500 Christians. C.Y.F has an enrolment of 50 members but before the law was enacted for age limit to be 25 years, the movement had a total of 150 member after that law was implemented many youths above twenty five went to other groups or movement in the congregation. The congregation is been headed by rev pastor who is the secretary of Fako presbytery made up of other small parishes within that geographical zone. The Pastor is appointed by the synod office. In every congregation there is a chairman elected by the members of that congregation for a two years term of office which can be dissolved if member acknowledges non-Christian practices by writing a petition to the head office for termination of post of responsibility. The chair person is accompanied by elders elected by the congregational member for a two years term of office. Elders are appointed to take charge of the affairs of groups and movements in the church. The pastors, chairperson and elders are the ruling bodies in the church. These elders give an account of the activities of the various groups and movements in the church.

The Church has a monthly planned programme for its activities and the whole congregation is been informed about publication of names of those interested in liturgy, bible reading and laid preachers where a training workshop is schedule for the various task. After the workshop, the congregation publishes their monthly schedules for group procession, lay preachers, liturgy and Sunday school assistance. C.Y.F been a movement under the church are included in activities like group procession, Sunday

school and Young Presbyterian assistance, bible reading, liturgy and laid preachers for those interested.

The congregation organizes quarterly congregation meeting headed by the congregational chairperson where affairs of the church are been discussed before forwarded to the head office concerning the management of the congregation and for resolution on issues not resolved.

Based on the interview with the pastor, C.Y.F movement is nurtured by the congregation, by preparing them for baptism, confirmation and other Christian rites and the congregation even intercedes for them as well as all Christians. The congregation plan some spiritual activities like work camps, workshops, retreats for the youths or support and advices them on activities planned by the youths themselves. Since the youths are not financially sustainable; the congregation supports activities of some youth movements like young Presbyterians (Y.P) and Sunday school (SUS) by paying their transportation to rallies, come together and exchange visits and also pays for their study materials. The C.Y.F movement is closely linked to the congregation because it is not an independent entity on its own.

4.3.1 The Church policy towards youth works in Down Beach Limbe.

Based on the interview with the pastor and youth secretary, Presbyterian Church had only the women and men departments. Since the older generation was passing away the Church saw the need of a solid foundation for the future leaders of tomorrow which enabled them to create youth departments to cater for the youths. The creation of the departments of youth affairs made up of, the national Sunday school office and young Presbyterians was geared towards the improvement of youth work. Youths form a formidable force in the church today and tomorrow since the older generation are passing away; the church has put many departments to carter for the youths.

The youth's department publishes annually youth splash which have bible study materials, social issues and youths themselves contribute in writing this youth splash which makes it very special and is being consumed in Cameroon not only by Presbyterians but other denominations use it. The youth splash is also rich with some economic activities which go a long way to empower these youths.

The youth department is headed by a national youth secretary who is in charge of organizing Christian youth fellowship rallies, other regional meetings and all activities of Y.P and Sunday school. The youth department has structured youths work in such a way that age has been taken in to consideration that is why the children department which is Sunday school and young Presbyterian need to be solid in order to have a better C.Y.F. already verse with the church curriculum. The lessons have be structure to suit the mental stages of these children.

Youths are now elected as elders in congregations so that the voices can be heard.

4.3.2 Youths participation in Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon.

Based on the youth secretary interview, decisions taken at the synod stipulate that every congregation local session should have two youths elected, in this case young people are not only seen as leaders tomorrow but are involved in leadership today. In this way the voices of the youths are heard in their session meetings. Youths are now chair persons and elders in congregations.

Based on the youth interviews, in the general administration of the church, 90% of those admitted into the seminaries or who graduate from the seminaries to be pastors are youths. Youths are given the opportunity to participation as ministers in the church.

The youths also acknowledges the fact that the church has given them the priority to coordinate worship service by preaching, liturgy, singing and other activities on the national day which is every 11th of February. Thus giving them the opportunity to

understand some biblical issues and which would enhance their spiritual growth. A person can preach only after undertaking a course and going into in depth study of the bible.

Christian youth's fellowship is also in charge of running Sunday school programme and young Presbyterian activities. Y.P and SUS have their teachers who are employed by the Church or voluntaries but C.Y.F members have the obligation to send assistance every Sunday during children worship service.

Based on the youths interviews, the youths are also involved in all domains in the church, for example, in the preaching, healing ministry (some youths have the gift of healing powers and prophecies were God uses them greatly), procession, singing, bible reading, liturgy and so on.

Based on the youth interviews, C.Y.F members have diversified activities and their roles are indispensable like in bible study, lay worship, sing during worship service, process, reading bible lessons, organize retreat programmes, organization of evangelical trips to convert new members for Christ.

C.Y.F do have weekly meetings where bible study is been taught and they follow their youth splash which is so rich in biblical, social and economic event for spiritual growths of the youths. During these meetings, they do singing practice and try to live as a family. Lay worship is not compulsory, members interested officiating worship service are free to undertake lay worship training and can lead worship service following the order of worship or liturgy. Interested members who want to participate in the bible lesson enroll for bible reading and read the lesson during church service.

Retreats are organized by the entire group for all members and this is usually found in the programme Retreats enable members to go more in depth into their spiritual lives and bring members closer to God. The main goal of retreat is for the spiritual growth of its members through deep meditation, prayer and communing with God. All group members are encouraged to attend.

Group evangelization is a way of spreading the gospel to others who have not accepted Jesus as their personal lord and savior. C.Y.F. members also look for mobile jobs were

they work in Christian homes and are motivated financially which helps them to run the group. In special events like Christmas day, Easter and lent week, they perform biblical dramas and debate on some social issue in order to educate the community.

The church has fitted the youth movement in the church calendar such that they have hierarchical trend of their activities from congregational level to zonal level to presbytery and finally to national level where they participate in rallies in singing competition, bible quiz selected from the youth splash which is their study material.

Based on the interview with the youths, C.Y.F competes with other members in the same zone. Zones are selected Presbyterian parishes in a geographical region. Rallies are come together where C.Y.F members compete with other groups in the form of exhibitions, bible quiz, singing competitions and drama and prizes are awarded to the best performances. C.Y.F rallies also serve as evangelization zones and different congregations' host.

4.3.3 Factors influencing youths participation in Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon

Based on youth's interview, C.Y.F members' participation has been influenced by religious, social, economic and political reasons. Most Christian youth fellowship members' spirituality can be traced from childhood from Sunday school to young Presbyterians. Youth's participation has been mostly for spiritual growth that why more focus is on the youth splash in order to strengthen their faith. Bible study is the main activity during group meetings that why most C.Y.F member are able to preach on Sunday service. Most C.Y.F members have ended up going to seminaries and have become pastor after their theological course.

The youths also acknowledge that C.Y.F has also been a social forum where people meet Christian friends especially during their rallies where they compete with other

members of different congregations. Some C.Y.F members have met the spouse only in those gatherings.

The youth centers empowers youth through some workshop for self-employment which has enabled some youths to be self-employed. During rallies the youths carry out exhibition where they sell their products and fund raised is used to carry out projects for the group and also aid in humanitarian work like support to prisoners, orphans and so on.

4.3.4 Youths vision in Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon

Based on the national youth secretary interview, one of the greatest challenges for the youths today is unemployment so the youth department has taken a step forward in creating youth centers for training entrepreneurship as a means of empowering the youths in order to create self-employment.

The youth department is also producing rich youth splash (C.Y.F study book) which strengthen the youths spiritually and socio economically.

Based on the Pastor interview, one of the greatest visions for youth work has been intergrading the youths in leadership scheme in the church as each congregation is entitled to have a youth as an elder so that their voices could be heard.

Based on the youths' interview responses, there is a positive vision for youth work as to the recent construction of the youth center in Kumba to carter for the needs of the youth and also the decision for electing a youth as an elder in every session is a great achievement for future youth work.

4.3.5 Challenges faced by youths at Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon

All interviewees acknowledge unemployment as the greatest challenge most C.Y.F members just like youths in general in Cameroon face. Unemployment has affected their contribution in church since Presbyterians Church is an independent church, all communicants or non-communicants who have been confirmed are to pay their yearly contributions levied according to income earned. Some C.Y.F members are unable to pay those levies and also group contribution especially when a rally is coming up. Members need to pay transportation but still yet some members find it hard to pay because of their unemployment status since they are not entitled to any social benefit.

Based on youth's interview, the media has had a great impact on the youths because most youths are trying to copy western life style which they cannot incorporate in the church which has affected some members' spiritual growth and some members have left the church because they could not incorporate their new live style and the rules in the group.

The youths acknowledge the fact that the decision by the synod to limit C.Y.F membership from fifteen to twenty five years not thirty-five years as in the past has greatly affected groups. There has been a serious drop in total enrolment and most of them were executive member with brilliant ideals but were force to drop down from the post of responsibility.

4.5 Recommendations for youth work in Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon.

The youth secretary recommended that youth centers should be equipped to meet up with the needs of the society in order to enable the youth to be self-employed through vocational trainings. The challenges youth face today are quite different from those in those past so renovation should be done in those center to meet up with the present state of our society today.

Based on youth's interviews, youth's centers should be expanded to other regions for proximity to most groups and educational forums, seminars and workshop should be encouraged in order to combat youth unemployment. Also more projects should be executed and subsidized by the youth departments or congregations.

Youths are demanding for the church to set another day for children and youth Sunday because in February youths are preparing for their annual rally and cannot participate in many activities. And one day is not enough for youths to excel their talents.

Based on the youth's interview, they request Synod to reconsider the age limit decision as it was formally because it has affected most groups since some prominent members in the movement with mature ideas at the executive board are no longer eligible and total enrollment has dropped.

Youths also recommended that the cost of a youth splash should be reducing so that affordability is met by members. Most youths are unemployed and they acknowledge the need of a youth splash which empowers the spiritually, socially and economically.

5. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF YOUTH'S PARTICIPATION IN MIKAEL AGRICOLA, MUNKKINIEMI PARISHES AND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH DOWN BEACH LIMBE, CAMEROON.

The research entails a comparative study of two Evangelical Lutheran congregations in Finland, Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi and Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon. Culture has been the driving force of differences in youth's participation as seen in the two churches. The material from the Evangelical Lutheran church has basically been from two congregations with two different cultural backgrounds, Mikael Agricola with a Finnish background and Munkkiniemi with Swedish and Finnish background with the same banner of European concept of religion. In Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon the religious input is quite close to the African, American and South East Asia concept of Pentecostalism and fundamentalism.

The structural aspect of the Church has greatly impacted youth participation in the church politically through the church policies. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland is a state church and their policies work hand in hand with Finnish policies while Presbyterian Church as a whole is an independent entity and their policies are geared towards the growth of the church. When comparing the different churches one can see some similarities and differences from the church structure and policies which determines people's participation to an extent.

Even though Finland and Cameroon differs culturally, the organization structure of the church are quite similar in the hierarchical structure even though there are some differences in church administration and policies. It was quite amazing realizing that the ruling body of both Churches is the synod office with the same Christian rite like baptism, confirmation, marriage and burial rites.

According to Easthope 1974, Comparative method refers to a specific kind of comparison traditionally treated as a core method of comparative social science which is concerned with cross societal differences and similarities (Ragin, 1987:1.) In order to come out with a comparative study, these three congregations must be examined in reference to their similarities and differences.

5.1 Some common aspects among the three congregations

All three congregations focus on the teachings of Jesus Christ as the son of God and acknowledges one baptism of the Father Son and Holy Spirit be it infant or adult baptisms. All focus on the Ten Commandments and believe in God the father, Son and Holy Spirit. Confirmation rite are done after confirmation training necessary in all three congregations as a fulfillment of Christian faith where one is eligible to take the holy communion, church marriage, god parents and burial. And all three congregations have a spiritual head which is a pastor to officiate in spiritual events.

Bible study has been the goal of all three congregations which can be trace from the confirmation training, church service and group meetings. The bible has been the key factor for spiritual growth of Christian in all three congregations. Spiritual growth has rooted from infancy through children club meetings and excursion in the Evangelical Church while bible study and rallies had been the main activities for the children in Sunday school and young Presbyterian gathering of the Presbyterian Church.

Music and sport activities has been a point of interest for the youths in all three congregations with either a music team or a choir with the motive of glorifying God through praise and worship which has been an attractive tool for the youths who have later turn to surrender their life to Christ.

A forum for socialization has been a common factor in the three congregations where the youths go to group meetings, camps and rallies to meet friends, relax and create

acquaintances .Based on the interviews, some youths were able to meet their future spouse in such forums and during those gatherings, they really relax and forget about the worries of life giving them the edge to attend such social gathering like camps and rallies more and more.

Youths have expanded their social network through face book connections by having a home page for their activities in Agricola and Munkkiniemi and those in Cameroon without internet access have been connected through social gathering like rallies, burial grounds and evangelization venues. These venues have enabled the youths to link up with their friends and some of they have been able to attend some events which has motivated them to join group meetings and other activities.

Membership has been open to all youths regardless of race or nationality. There has not been any discrimination for membership in all three congregations.

A recent common feature in relation to youth's leadership has emerged from two congregations, Munkkiniemi and Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe. One youth was recently elected as a representative in the city council board (Ruuti) which has given the youths an opportunity for their voices to be heard. Likewise in Presbyterian Church as a whole, youths have been granted the opportunity to be elected as an elder in every congregation in order to represent the youths in all the affairs of the church and this has made the youths to be more active in the church. Leadership has also been seen in all three congregations where the youths themselves coordinate their group meetings without the help of their coordinators which is a good aspect of commitment and signs of maturity.

The congregations have been supportive to the youth departments in their activities spiritually and financially because a priest or pastor has always been the over seer of all the activities. Youths camps, leadership training, evangelization trip have been funded by local congregations.

5.2 Differences between the three Congregations

One difference between the two churches can be seen in the allocation of funds. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland is under state control while Presbyterian Church in Cameroon is an independent institute therefore; policies are different from this perspective. Moreover, members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are entitled to pay one percent of their monthly income while in Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, Christians are levied a sum to be paid annually according to their income with no link to the tax system. These differences influence some policies in church work. The economic situation of these two countries has greatly affected religious aspects in the societies involved. The Finnish society has a welfare state which has an impact in the social life of the citizen and to a greater extent influence youths activities whereas; Cameroon economic situation has influence the youths in their social life. There is a saying that poor people seek God more.

The structure of the Church in the different congregations has impacted youth participation to an extent. On basis of youth interviews, youths in Munkkiniemi acknowledge the fact that they do not have direct link to the church. The youths focus mostly on the Wednesday youth meeting and camp training except when there is a special Wednesday service or church exhibition (Bazaar) and they seldom attend church service as they claimed is full of old people and boring. The youth affirmed that they carry assigned duties during their confirmation training in which they are entitled to attend church service a number of times in order to be confirmed.

Mikael Agricola youths participate in their Wednesday services where they take charge of the music team in the whole service and assist in the distribution of flyers and coffee and tea after service. Youths also take active part in leadership training, confirmation training and sport. Some youths still acknowledge that they sometime worship on Sundays, but not often, and assist in decorating the church altar.

On the basis of the interviews, C.Y.F of Presbyterian Church have had a strong link to the church through their active participation in church services either through bible reading, choir, liturgy, preaching, processing, drama and Sunday school and Y.P assistance. The C.Y.F have been assigned to take charge of the whole Sunday service, usually called the youth Sunday, which takes place annually in February where they are solely responsible for preaching, processing, singing, liturgy, ushering, bible reading, cleaning and decoration of the church and assisting in Sunday school and Y.P service as well. The youths also participate in their weekly group meetings.

Age has been a factor that has influenced participation to some extent. The next question is to assess if age is a cultural factor when focusing on the three congregations. In Mikael Agricola congregation, the main point of attraction has been their Wednesday service with no age limit and many people turn to come and everyone is free to worship. Age is not an issue in Agricola Church even though the average age range for other activities like the confirmation camps is between fifteen and twenty three years.

Based on the youths interviews, youth above nineteen years in Munkkiniemi congregation, do not find a place in the Wednesday meetings and youth camps. Three

members above nineteen years who are still interested to continue youth work feel uncomfortable in the group because they think they are too old to be in the group and have attempted to create an adult group which has not been successful because they have not been able to have quite a reason number of interested youths to go forward. Age is therefore a limiting factor for continuity for some youths who are interested in their spiritual growth.

In Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, the age limit for C.Y.F members from its creation has been from fifteen to thirty five years and it has been moving smoothly but with the recent decision from the synod for membership to be brought down from fifteen to twenty five years has cause instability and criticism in most groups as most of the members were heading their executive board and most youth believe that age is wisdom. Some members are not willing to leave C.Y.F to join other movements. This recent decision has resulted to a drop in membership and many youths have criticized the youth department for such a decision. There is no specific age range for confirmation training in Presbyterian Church as a whole, every Christian is free to undertake confirmation in order to be recognized as a Christian which enables them to take part in any Christian rite like communion, marriage, god parents and burial rites.

On my own note, age has a role in youth participation in the church and do have some cultural links.

Mikael Agricola recently had an additional concept of in-depth spiritual growth through home group meetings which started in February 2012. As for the progress of this home group meeting, the number has not been increasing even though members have created

face book home page. An attempt to create an international home group was not successful by two students from Diaconal University of applied sciences Järvenpää during their six weeks placement based on a project. The youth department should think of a better way of managing this in order to empower the youth spiritually.

The Christian youth fellowship movement (C.Y.F) of Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe and all over Cameroon has embarked on evangelization to reach out to those who have not heard about Jesus Christ. It has also been a positive way of bringing new converts to the Christian regime and some of them have ended up being members of C.Y.F movement. Social gathering such as event of the death of a member has been grounds for evangelization in which all members of a zone are obliged to meet until the burial of the member.

The youth pastors, youth coordinators and youth leaders have been the head of the youth groups in Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations in Finland while the youth elder, group president have been the leaders of youth movement with the congregational pastor acting as an overseer under the umbrella of the youth department with the national youth secretary as the head. The pastors are the spiritual actors.

The youth department in Presbyterian Church under the leadership of the national youth secretary publishes a yearly plan with biblical, economic and social lessons in a book called youth's splash to be followed by all the groups in the various congregations. This gives a unique trend for the follow up and they also have a rundown of activities like rallies, youth day theme, Easter programme and Christmas programmes for the group to

accomplish. This has been a motivating factor for youth's participation because they have some tasks to be accomplished annually. These planned programmes give the youths the opportunity to meet other group members especially during their come together meetings like rally competition giving the opportunity to learn new songs and get to know other members of the movement and new knowledge for the growth of the group.

In Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations, the youth department gives the youths a theme to focus on for three years and the theme use now is "HOLY" while the youth's coordinators develop their activities based on the theme. Each group turn to be a little bite different in the activities and group do not have a unique time frame for camp meetings, confirmation training, leadership training or any common gathering where they meet other groups.

The C.Y.F movement in Presbyterian Church in Cameroon has a national uniform which act as an identity factor for membership. The uniform acts as a symbol of membership and acceptance to the rules of the movement under the banner of serving Jesus Christ. Wearing uniforms is a cultural phenomenon in Cameroon because uniforms act as an identity factor. Uniforms are used in Schools from elementary to high school and different movements and institutions are identified by their different uniforms. Uniforms are not worn during group meetings; members are allowed to wear their uniforms only during ceremonies like on Sunday worship service or when the C.Y.F members are assigned to officiate in group procession, ushering, rally grounds, burial ceremonies, evangelization grounds, and dedication and official issues. Members

are forbidden to wear their uniforms as assorted dresses and when a member dies, he or she is buried with the uniform. Members wear assorted dresses during group meetings and some members have been criticized for not dressing well and have been accused of western influence in their dressing which has caused great division among some members who believe their freedom has been overlooked. Some members have left the movement because of this action. This phenomenon is contrary to westernized culture. Wearing uniforms is not a cultural phenomenon in most European countries in which Finland is inclusive. Wearing uniforms is not an aspect in any youth activity in the two congregations or in institutions. People are free to wear what they think is best for them.

Socialization has been the main focus of youths in both Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations based on the interviews because the main pull factor has been friends, music and relaxation while spiritual growth has been secondary. This could be justified by the poor turnout of the home group which emerged early this year in Mikael Agricola. Camp meetings have been inspiring because most activities are geared towards relaxation and few instances of bible lessons. The Wednesday service at Agricola has become more popular these days because of an amazing music team which is so captivating not the boring nature of Sunday service populated by old people.

On the other hand, the C.Y.F movement in the Presbyterian Church has been formulated in a way that more focus has been for the spiritual growth of its members through bible lessons in the youth splash, retreat programmes, evangelization trips, and bible quiz

during rally competition, Sunday school and Y.P leadership training programmes and preaching and liturgy training programmes.

There has also been a strong bond for spiritual growth emanated from a solid foundation from Sunday school programmes to young Presbyterian (Y.P). Approximately 70 % of C.Y.F members have gone through Sunday school and Young Presbyterian movement. Most members are so verse with some of the activities like rallies and bible lessons from childhood. Nevertheless, C.Y.F movement even though has spiritual empowerment as primary goal; socialization has been a secondary factor for youth participation in the church.

The economic situation of the various societies has also influence their activities to an extent. Cameroon is a country with high unemployment rate and youths are the most affected has influence participation also in the church and has changed their scope of activities. C.Y.F movement have resorted to participating in paid jobs where all members are obliged to take part in order to raise funds for the smooth running of the movement since the movement do have minimal support from the congregation since the Church is an independent unit. Local congregations have been supportive to youth programmes especially Sunday school and Young Presbyterian activities like rallies and other come together. Some of the fund raised after job contract has been undertaken have been used to buy the group youth splash, visit to the prison, support during evangelization and rally trips to reduce the burden of levying money to members who may not be able to afford.

On the other hand, Finland been a social welfare state does not put youths in this crisis. Every Finnish youth has access to basic necessities and there is no need for engaging in activities like paid jobs in order to meet up with basic contribution because the Church has allocated funds for things like this. The congregations make allocation for youth camps.

6. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 The structure and policies in the three congregations.

Church policies have been influenced by the structure of the churches. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church is a state church while Presbyterian Church in Cameroon is an independent church thus their policies are influenced by policies implemented by the Churches. The Church policies in Finnish Evangelical church is more inclined to state policies whereas that of Presbyterian Church which is an independent body is geared towards the growth of the church. The Church policies in the three congregations have impacted youth participation in the church. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church does not have a static youth policy but rules which youth coordinators follows, giving the youth coordinators liberal power over the activities of youth work not giving it a unique setting because the goal are the same but way of meeting those goals are determined by the coordinators.

Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations follow the structure of the Evangelical Lutheran Church with a youth pastor, youth coordinator and a musical team. The difference in youth activities can be traced from the initiative of the youth leaders. Mikael Agricola congregation has a youth pastor, a youth coordinator and two assistance youth leaders who manage the entire programme of youth work in the church. Mikael Agricola has a music team and also has a TV broadcasting programme. The

Youth coordinators have a strong social network through face book and TV broadcast programme where more and more publicity is made. The pastor and the youth coordinator are in charge of the Wednesday service while the assistants take charge of the confirmation training, leadership and other youth work. The Wednesday service at Mikael Agricola is being updated to meet the needs of the emerging youths. More immigrants are worshipping during the Wednesday service and there has been an update with supply of English flyers for English speaking youth, before there was a projector on the main prayers and team of the day.

The Mikael Agricola congregation has a pastor but the officiating pastors on Wednesday service are not always the same with visiting pastors from other congregations, and also the music teams keep changing on a weekly basis. Therefore every Wednesday service is different in one aspect or the other.

The welcoming nature of the youth coordinator at Mikael Agricola church has been an inspiring factor because everyone feels welcome at the entrance usually with candies and salutation and again at the end of the service he is always there to give a warm good bye with no discrimination. The acquaintances of the youth coordinator created in the past have been a motivating factor for recommendation from relatives and friends since he has been in the same congregation for over thirteen years, giving him experience and overview of the needs of the youths.

Offerings are sometime used to buy food stuff for students who are in need and the offer is open to all with no aspect of discrimination during distribution.

The Wednesday service at Mikael Agricola also offers an atmosphere for communing with God because there are quiet moments where youths have the opportunity to commune with God with no distraction and the youth coordinator usually go in front for those who need someone to pray with them. That special time of silence is really good for youths to focus on what seems best for them in the house of God which is usually fifteen minutes

The Wednesday service has been an attractive force for people from all age groups and no one feels ashamed of being part because the age range is between fifteen to thirty years.

The music team has also been a pull factor for the increasing turnout because many youths accepted the fact that they worship because of the music not because they believe in God even though in the long run things have eventually changed and have accepted to follow the ways of God. While other youths have been attracted because they want to be engaging in sport activities in which they have also develop social network.

On the basis of the interviews, many youths have been attracted because of recommendation from their parents, elders and friends who have been part of Agricola in the past under the same leadership because the youth coordinator has been in charge of youth work for thirteen years and he acknowledges a drastic increase in the past years because for five years when he took office they had an enrolment of twenty three but today Mikael Agricola has an average of two hundred youths during their Wednesday service which is amazing.

Youth work in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, can be traced from children's programmes under the children and family department where the children are engaged in club activities to confirmation training and camp meeting and group activities in the churches, but the connection does not go to adulthood because in some congregations, youths over twenty cannot find a place. For example, Munkkiniemi congregation does not offer activities for youths above twenty which weakens the bond of spiritual growth to an extent because if the youths cannot fit themselves in youth work in the city or university camp then they are lost and only come back when they have children.

The recent election of a youth in Munkkiniemi congregation as a representative in the city council has been a good policy because youths' issues may be presented by youths themselves.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church policy on confirmation training has influenced youths' participation in the church greatly because many youths want to marry in church, be godparents and be buried by the church and this has given youths the opportunity to learn basic church doctrine and some youth have had the opportunity to go further for leadership training and others have grown spiritually.

In Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, the youth department has formulated a national programme for all the congregations and the activities are similar everywhere. The youth department is solely responsible for the growth of youth work which begins from Sunday school to young Presbyterian to Christian youth's fellowship, to Christian men fellowship or to Christian women fellowship is give a continuous chain of spiritual outreach from childhood to adulthood.

The way the Sunday services have been designed has also influenced youth participation because the youths are been given opportunities to participate in preaching, liturgical worship service, reading of lessons, singing, processing, Y.P and Sunday school worship services and ushering.

The church policy on special youth day Sunday has also enhanced their participation in the church because they know it is their day, they are ready to do everything to make that single day special.

The institution of rally competitions has empowered the youths in their evangelisation work and since bible quiz has influence overall grade in competitions, youths have focus more on the biblical aspect in the youth splash because every group want to be winner in other to participate in consequence rallies like the presbytery and national rallies.

The recent Church policy on electing at least one youth as an elder in every congregation has greatly influenced their participation in the church knowing that they do have a representation in the congregation meaning their voices are been heard has been a positive aspect for youth work because youth want to put in their best in order to be elected.

The Church policy on workshop training for youth centres has greatly influenced their participation because most youths want to participate in those workshops for self-employment and participation is guaranteed with membership and the course of member take time which may influence ones spiritual growth.

The use of face book as a medium of publicity has been positive because events are been published and youths have an update of event.

Mikael Agricola congregation came up with a home group as a way of combating the spiritual needs of youths in the congregation in February 2012. This has not been so successful because the turnover has not been encouraging but there is still hope because the group have their page on face book. The youths needs to be encouraged to go forward because it took many years for the Wednesday service to be what it is today. Based on the interview from the coordinator, attendance was only twenty-three for five years but today, the average population is two hundred. What should be done is more sensitization about the home group. Home group has been an exceptional activity when comparing youth activities in the other two congregations.

Munkkiniemi congregation on the other hand has a Swedish background because sustainable part of the population at Munkkiniemi is Swedish speaking Finns. The over all structure of the two congregations are the same but the difference lies in their activities officiated by their youth coordinators. Munkkiniemi congregation has a youth coordinator, a youth pastor and a music team just like Agricola.

Youth activities are based on the Wednesday meetings and camp meetings and age has been a driving force for participants have been from fifteen - nineteen years and those above do not find their place in the group which is quite different from Agricola and Presbyterian Church. Few youths above nineteen years who are still interested in church work are attempting to form a group of young adults above eighteen years but are unable because only few youths have showed sign of interest.

The music team has their own programme not connected to the Wednesday group meetings in Munkkiniemi whereas in Mikael Agricola, the music team officiate during Wednesday service and in Presbyterian Church down Beach Limbe, the youth's participant in the choir during Sunday services and rallies.

Youth's participation can be seen in leadership through a recent election conducted where a youth from Munkkiniemi became a member in council board (Ruuti) 2011. This is quite similar to the decision taken by the synod of Presbyterian Church enabling youths to be elected as elders in all congregations in order to present youths in the church.

The structure of Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe has greatly influenced youths participation in the church. The C.Y.F has a planned programme which must be followed. The youths have their weekly meeting where they focus basically on three issues, the youth splash which involves biblical, economic and social events, singing practice and prayer sessions. These weekly programmes can only be altered when there is an upcoming event where the youths need to be involved in diverse activities such as rallies. Every congregation has a youth elder who is in charge of youths activities. The youth elder visits their weekly meetings once in a while but need to get update of their activities because anything affecting the group will be channel to the responsible youth elder.

The youths participate in Sunday service in preaching, lay worship, Sunday school lessons, choir, procession, church cleaning and ushering. The youth have specific Sundays when they are in charge to take responsibilities in the worship service in procession, cleaning of the church and decorations, singing during service which often scheduled once a month depending on the congregation roster. On special occasions like the youth day, the youths take charge of all the activities during that Sunday service from preaching the gospel, liturgy, reading of lessons, procession, cleaning of the church and decoration, offering sales, songs during service and assist in Sunday school and Y.P worship too. This is quite different from the other two congregations.

As for music team, all members are involved in singing in the form of a choir and C.Y.F is mostly in charge of songs during Sunday offerings.

Evangelisation has been a common event in most social gatherings such as death events and rallies where the gospel of Jesus is reach out to those who have received it. Face book connection is not common because most members are still computer illiterate and very few have access to network which is not even available in rural areas. Group retreats are organized in order to strengthen the spiritual growth of its members and this retreat involves the pastor as the officiating head. The main activities are mediation and prayer sessions in an attempt to commune with God.

C.Y.F members sometimes take a job in other to raise funds for the group when they have a financial project to be accomplished. All members are obliged to participate and fines are allocated for members who fail to accomplish the task. Fund raised sometimes assist in transportation during rallies, evangelisation trips and other projects.

Membership into C.Y.F must be established after a probation period of minimum of six months of which an official ceremony to be done and members are supposed to take an oath of acceptance by affirming the faith through C.Y.F Promise and aim in front of the whole congregation and the officiating pastor hand them a badge as a symbol of membership and the member will need to be on the C.Y.F official uniform.

6.2 The cultural effect and consequences of youth's attitude toward the church in the three congregations

Based on the interviews from the three congregations, culture has greatly influenced youth participation in the church. Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations have had similar impact as their culture is quite similar under westernised concepts whereas there have been great differences in youth participation in Presbyterian Church due to African concept of religion. The activities of the two congregations in Finland have been the same even though the two congregations had different backgrounds with Finnish and Swedish background in Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi respectively. The differences between these two congregations were quite minimal. The approach to youth work was a little bit different in that Agricola had a regular Wednesday service

with modern skills which caught the attention of most youths of over two hundred worshippers whereas Munkkiniemi had very few Wednesday special services. Factors influencing youths' participation in the church were the same in these two congregations which were basically for socialisation purposes.

Language was the only factor which is clear because Agricola was basically Finnish and recently some English is used in the Wednesday service through flyers and main projector while in Munkkiniemi, Swedish is dominant and Finnish secondary because a greater proportion of the population are Swedish speaking Finns.

Children in Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations have a place in the church through the children and family department where they have clubs programmes, excursions and other activities relating to the church but there is not that strong focus on spiritual bond in children activities with more focus on socialisation. It is obvious that the children grow in this regime until they are fifteen where they go for the confirmation training in which they are more exposed to some Christian doctrine relevant. After the confirmation training, most youths do not find a place in the church and are seen only during parenthood when they bring the children to clubs. The society has a format which has grown from generation to generation in which the Christian follows except new policies are implemented which calls for changes, if not it will remain the same. Based on interviewees, socialisation has been the primary factor for participation while spiritual growth has been secondary.

On the other hand, the approach to participation in the church in Presbyterian church has been primary rooted for spiritual empowerment which can be stress from the strong foundation of childhood Christian doctrine from Sunday school to Young Presbyterian teaching which has made children to grow up with that notion of trusting in God for a better future which can also be traced from the economic point of view where people focus on God for deliverance from poverty as seen as a pull factor for most Africa countries in their quest for God. The concept of participation has some cultural aspect in which past generations having been following the same practice and since policy

makers' haven made changes, the pattern then continues until new policies are enacted towards Christian attitudes.

The society has greatly influenced youth participation in the church through the media. The media has greatly influenced youths' participation in all three congregations. Sexuality issues have given youths divided mind in their religious beliefs because most youths are confused about the truth about religion because of difference schools of thought. The impact of a TV show about homosexual in 2010 where about three thousand Evangelical Lutheran Church members resigned has greatly affected people who do have mixed feelings about sexuality. On the other hand, the Church is producing magazine about things of the church in Finland which has been an inspiring factor in the religious journey of some members. Never the less, whose faith has been built on a solid foundation does not have any impact from the difference schools of taught but the weaker Christians are the most affected.

Culture has greatly influenced policy makers in decision making process in these societies. The confirmation training has been a long term custom for the Finns which has acted as a determinant for church rituals like marriages, godparents or burial ceremonies which people do not want to miss in life. About 90% of youths in Finland attend the confirmation training at fifteen years which is like a tradition for the youths. Policies makers are inclined by these customs which has also influence the growth of the church.

Globalisation has affected the attitudes of some C.Y.F members through their dressing habits and this has been a great challenge in the group which is not accepted in the bylaws of the movement which has resulted to some members leaving the group because they could not abide to those norms of the group.

6.3 Youths vision in the future in the three congregations.

Based on the interviews, youth work is growing in all three congregations as youths activities are been diverted to the evolving society with changes in the pattern of worship service and leadership approach as a way of allowing youths voices to be heard has been positive of recent.

Youths are more motivated to understand the spiritual need through the initiation of home groups, retreats, evangelisation trip, and leadership courses and camps meetings. Also through social network connection, more youths are attracted to some youth's activities.

Most youths are getting involved in voluntary services in church work for the growth of the church. In Munkkiniemi, some youths have decided to do their nine months voluntary work rather than going to the army. In Agricola Church, some youths take care of the children clubs for twenty Euros which is not equivalent to payment for the job but just an incentive. In Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, youths are active in many voluntary tasks in the church like cleaning and decoration, Sunday school and Y.P assistance, and many events in the church.

6. 4 Conclusion

The research was a comparative study of youth's participation in three congregations, two from the Evangelical Lutheran perspective in the same city (Helsinki) with slight difference in the implementation of youth policies but there was no big difference in cultural context even though Munkkiniemi congregation had a greater population of Swedish speaking Finns while Agricola was more of Finnish dominated. Cultural differences did not have any great impact on youth work since both congregations had

the European religious concept. On the one hand, Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe was different from the other two congregations with African religious concept. In a nutshell, three aspects can be seen as the main core difference in three congregations, the structural differences in the congregation and the implementation of youth policies in these congregations and the cultural impact on youth participation.

Based on the research results, I can also conclude that the research hypothesis of youth participation on grounds of “Spirituality as the primary goal and socialization secondary for youth work in Christian youth fellowship (C.Y.F) in Presbyterian Church in Cameroon while socialization is the primary reason and spirituality secondary in youths participation in Mikael Agricola and Munkkiniemi congregations in Evangelical Lutheran church of Finland” can be confirmed in youths’ interview as reason for youths’ participation in the church.

The main challenge faced during the research was getting data and book from Cameroon and language barrier when carrying out the interviews in Finland but these obstacles were overcome in the long run as analysed in the research method.

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Mikael Agricola congregation youths.

Munkkiniemi congregation youths.

Presbyterian Church down Beach Limbe youths.

APPENDICES

Interviews with the youths in the three congregations

Group interview at Agricola Church (Six youths)

Marie, I m from Cameroon studying intercultural studies in communication and administration in Vaasa where I'm doing a comparative research on youths participation in the evangelical Lutheran church in Agricola which is Finnish background and Munkkiniemi parish which is Swedish and Presbyterian church in Cameroon because I notice the activities and youth work are quite different that is why I was interested in the topic.

What is the age range of youth in Agricola?

It ranges from 15-25 or more. It depends. Most people come for their confirmation camp and some continue.

Which are some of the activities youths are involve in at Agricola church?

Well this is a tricky question because it depends on the individual. For me I am involved in lots of stuffs .I'm involve in youths activities and hang out here just for fun but mostly on Wednesdays when we have the mass and on Thursday also and once I was on a Friday. Well, I am here at list three days or even five days, Mondays and Tuesdays I do the technique stuff, Thursday music and Sundays come for the mass.

2nd: I have this club for little children from 7-12 years old and have two this kind of clubs I run them with my friend and we get a little money from it. It is a kind of work

that enables you to have fun with the kids and kind of charity. It is about 20euros and depends how long you have been doing it.

Apart from the Wednesday service of which I have been there twice, do you have other specific activities?

It is like volunteering, helping in arranging the altar.....if you want to go and help you can go. And then we have this bible circle on Tuesday and on Wednesday is the mass and leadership training for confirmation camp training for an assistance.-

We play football on Fridays. I have been there once...laugh ...I actually go there I don't forget about that...apparently six days a week.

Which are some of the factors which influence youth participation in these actives?

Friends and the older workers are nice people.

We have something in common like been here and in the mass. it is like unique.... you can't get the feeling somewhere else. Open atmosphere is another one and the camps bring us together really much.

How many times do you have the camp meetings?

Emmh we have about six or seven.

What is done in those camp meetings?

The confirmation...

For the kids they have at least two lessons a day and they learn about the church, religion and practice what the like.

The confirmation camp even though we go there for fun we assist and lead bible session.

The confirmation is educational. We have duties, arrange and led session

Is there any vision for youth work in the future?

Well, I like it very much the way it is actually. I have got a lot of new friends but I can see greater future because I'm so involved. I see a place where everybody will be happy and welcome. I think it is evolving more and more into that way. It welcomes everybody.

This is my third year and I have see changes which is great. The people who are here are very welcoming and interactive and there are more people than when I started. There were only two people the year i started. Our age are disappearing.

Do the media have an impact in youth work?

It is bizar... It just that people have the way they think about church. That is a big problem in the church. I think if we get a lot of people involve in I think we will get that little by little. The problem is this when you talk about church is like a building, box but it is not. Let the good new go around you.

It will be good for the people to realise that the people in the church are not different from everyone else.

When I say I'm going to church many say ...you ...you are not the type of people who go to the church. ; Any people think it is only the hallelujah thing. I did not belief that one can have friends, and different kinds of stuff.

Do you face some challenges in youth work?

I don't think it is a challenge. I have not face any challenge. I don't think is a challenge think is responsibility.

Do you have any recommendation for future youth work?

The important thing is to try and break the image of church, which is old fashion and where people. To spread the word like most of my friends come to the mass and see

what they like here. I think that is pretty cool. Most of my friends have actually stayed here and say did not know how the Church is like.

Also the world is changing and so the Church should be changing.
There is some unique about this place, the community-

I also think that it is not about value thinking of religion but if you have to belief you should see what the church is like. It is not about conservative or liberalist or whatever is just about accepting everybody how they are is an important aspect. People should not be fighting about should we be conservatives, liberals or whatever but that they should belief as been a one family.

When I say I believe in God most people ask me don't you belief in science.

You do not have to believe in God, I have couple of friends who are here who don't belief in God and still they are happy to be here.

Youths interview at Munkkiniemi Congregation.

I'm undertaking a comparative research on youth work in Finnish evangelical church and Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. Initially I wanted to focus on one congregation in the Finnish evangelical Lutheran church but now I want to focus on two congregations Munkkiniemi parish and Agricola's church. Because I notice Munkkiniemi parish is more of Swedish speaking people and decided to focus on both congregation.

Yes it is bigger.

And I wanted to see the differences and similarities of youth activities between the different parishes here. It is a comparative research between the Finnish Lutheran church and my home congregation P.CC .because I'm from Cameroon.

Yes

I initially thought of this after my three years experience in Finland where I visited many Finnish Lutheran churches and found mostly old people in Sunday worship. Which is a little bite different from my childhood notion about church and youth work .that is why I wanted to find out in this research. I have some few questions if you don't understand you can tell me because there is this language barrier.

Is there any youth policy that governs youth work in Munkkiniemi parish?

There are not specifically for youths but there is this administrative thing where I'm one of them. It is like church counselling (seurankunta neuvonto).It is an organisation that takes care of the whole church and everything and I'm part of it. But there is no policy for youths. It is more like we have any idea and we can discuss it and later we can think of how to do it if later we want to go somewhere for instance. A camp some where we have to plan it. Where we get the money but there is no policy for youth work.

The meeting we had lately was about the confirmation camps and stuff that have to deal with young people but there are no young people beside me.

Ok. So you are the only youth participating there? Yes

Do you have any idea if the Lutheran church has some policies for youth work?

Well I have heard of this...there is like a policy but I don't know where it is and what it is all about. But I do remember there is this thing for youth work. My friend was in one and was the secretariat there. It covers the whole Finland Churches. It is a small organisation but there are people from everywhere in Finland.

Does the church policy influence youth's participation in the church?

Yes mostly the rules on what we can do here. Now we have this meeting about confirmation camps. it consist of what we are going to do next summer during the camp

Which activities are youths involve in the church?

We have this Wednesday meetings and sometimes go to the church and have the real thing there. This Saturday we have this meeting down stairs and there will be music, bible reading and lectures and café. It is for everyone and I think mostly for young people. We also have weekend camps and go to nearby camp places and study and learn about our religion how it is different from others and confirmation camps during summer not for confirmation again but the longer come here and also train them to be leaders and to know about God and the bible which can help them to find their faith.

How often does the Saturday invent take place?

Well not often. Yes.

It was the idea of the boy who has been working here and now is in the university studying theology. It would be great to have more of such evenings about something different. Ok

Which factors attribute to youths participation in the church work?

Most youths are very excited about the confirmation camps and want to go on and keep doing the same thing. Over and over again that is the main reason the youths come here over and over again. There is a lot of action here now our days. They still have a band but it is more like a close group earlier it was like everyone can come and play music but now it is like for certain people who are committed to such a thing.

Also usually friends, I came here because my friend came here now I'm the only want that stayed it is funny.

What are some of the challenges youths face in church work?

Leadership is changing on yearly bases and we learn to work as a group on yearly bases. Now our days we have the little bite struggle with smoking because the law says if you are under 18 yrs you can't smoke but we don't want to punish them from church because it is not fair, that is kind of hard we don't know what to do.

well they are of course changes on what people want to do here I mean some people just want to play music and chill, some people are more of wanting to read the bible and experience something together and talk about these things. So it is hard to find the right channel sometimes. Before we use to have bible reading section here it just ended.

Which activities take place on Wednesday evenings?

It goes the same way every time. There is a short programme, there is properly some short bible story, then we think about it then there play games then we sing, and then we go to the small chapel and listen to someone who may tell a story or something. Then it goes away every time. We should have more of the bible reading section and music for those who want to be involved.

Are they involved in other Sunday services in the church?

Well, the youth's doesn't go there much because it is Sunday morning .But sometimes we have our Wednesday special service for youths, other people can come there but it is special for youths because we organize it and do special things but anyone can come.

Is there any link between youth work and the Munkkiniemi church?

Well, yes there is the priest who work here with us and bring certain aspects of the church. He has study theology that is why it is easy to go to him to ask about things and well the others are in the Church on Sunday. We don't usually know if there is something going on here because it is for older people and not our group or age group not necessarily. There is this case where there are usually old people and is hard to go there because most of the younger ones don't go there.

Do the media influence youth participation in church?

We use face book to communicate about ongoing events and there is this Church and city magazine we can read if there is anything going on there but. It is hard to catch every one because some people don't use face book.

Does it like have any negative impact towards youth's participation in the church?

Well, I haven't notice that but it could be this days when youths are trying to define themselves it is usually had to say I belief in God because today the media encourages people to be independent and materialist more.

Is there some vision for youth work in the future?

Well, yes there is this boy of my age , he isn't going to army he is coming to work here for nine months and that is a huge way to find a job here because they know and is easy to find a job. I have also been thinking when I go to the university to study theology they take to the summer camp some of these theologist who have studied it and there are leader there. So I'm hoping for a job sometimes.

Which recommendation do you have for future youths work?

Well, I think we should advertise more and more like big event and will be an idea to have it during summer, such that we can be outside and play music and everything that youths walking nearby may come and be like him this sounds nice, we should make it noisy in other to attract people.

How long have you been in Munkkiniemi youth group?

I was in the confirmation camp 2007 and so pretty much ever since then. So it is about five years.

How long does the confirmation training takes place?

There is this part where involves certain things you have to do before you can go to the camps or be confirm. You have to go to Sunday service and sometimes be here on Wednesdays. Some voluntary things you have to do also. There is the camp usually seven or eight days and then there is the confirmation service itself.

What is been done during the camp days?

Allots of learning about the bible and in schools they teach differently they don't specifically talk about what God did because they cannot assume there is God. Because they have to be very diplomatic if there is God because they cannot tell if there are some people who are....And cannot belief there is God and there is bible reading and learning about Jesus and God and the Holy Spirit and stuff about growing up and are usually lesson about growing you and becoming independent and also about relationship and family and usually Sunday services every day. We have this evening thing, programme funny shows and also medicating kind of thing.

What is usually the age group for this youth programme?

15-19 or 20 sometime there is this girl I think she is twenty three she comes here sometime one of the oldest. I think of staying here for a while.

Do those over 19 have any activity in the church?

We have been thinking about it, last year we almost made it but things did work out. It is hard to start the group because you don't know who wants to be there. What we want to do and where we want. It has been about three or four persons thinking about it so we need to ask more people what they want to do.

So what is your own rule in the organisation?

We have a meeting every month.

How is it structured is it like the parish council meet

Yes. And you are one of the.

Where you elected by the youths or what?

I was elected by the people living in this area. Ok

Second interview involving two youths from Munkkiniemi congregation

I am Marie, a student from the University of Vaasa carrying out a comparative research on youth participation in the Church in the Evangelical Lutheran Church and my home congregation Presbyterian Church.

Does the church have a policy towards youth work?

I don't understand.

I'm asking if the church has some rules, which must be put in place in church for youths work?

Yes we can be drunk here but I don't know if that is what you meant.

Sorry I don't understand.

Which are the activities youth participate in youth work at Munkkiniemi church?

We have these young evenings and sometimes do some programmes. Actually people do some programme and it is the young people who do it. Well we do some things in the church like during the church mesu , exhibitions. We like play music there and stuff like that.

How often are the activities like, it is on weekly or monthly or what?

Well those young evenings are on weekly bases and the exhibitions are once in a month or in two months. And also have a band that does music and acapella group, and also we have camps where we go for a week and learn stuff there.

How often do you have these camp meetings?

Once in two months may be

What are the overall or average participants in such activities?

30-40 it depends.

What is the age range?

From 15 years to 19 years.

Do you people participate in church activities?

Yes those exhibitions.

Does the exhibition take place on Sunday?

It depends usually not on Sundays but other days it is exhibition especially for the young people.

What do they display during these exhibitions how is it like?

It is fun.

Which activities take place?

We sing together and then we read the bible and preach but not usually often because the priest preach but young people usually have the opportunity to preach at the camps.

Which activities take place during the camp meetings?

Usually we have many things we do we eat and have this morning meetings and in the evenings we have this dinner and during the day we have lessons and sometime we learn about the bible and Jesus. It depends always.

Which factors attribute to youths participation in the church?

I think we have a lot of friends here and we want to see our friends and have so much fun here. The older young people attract a lot of people, like last summer 2011 we were like helping the priest in a big camp that everyone goes. Some guys here attract a lot of people.

Belief is also a factor if you belief and you want to come then you can come.

Pause for Google to translate because of language barrier.

What are some challenges face by young people in youth work?

I'm not quite sure if I understood you right but I think one people I know here is that people came too late and can be quite when need and sometime those activities are not properly arranged and are like chaos sometimes. It not too organise sometime.

Yes, some time our priest don't plan those meetings very well and sometime anger me.

What are the visions you have for youth work?

I think it is growing really fast last summer there was like 40 or 50 people who came here and I think it is growing really fast. We I began we were just fifteen 15 people and now it s something like sixty within four years.

Which are those factors which might have influence this increase?

I think it is mostly friend's net working and the attitude of some older member and the friends like him and want to behave like him. More people come.

Which recommendation do you have for future youth work?

Well it is really hard to say. I don't know people might be different. Organising youth camp in some places can be hard and is harder to organise youth work in some places. And if they have like ten people then others could say that I don't want to go there because there are only ten people and are not so cool or something.

How is the youth work linked to the Munkkiniemi parish created now?

Emmh I think we don't have so much to do in the Munkkiniemi parish. Parish leader during this four years I have spoken only twice with him we don't have much to do with the church. We don't have any special activity on Sundays. If we want to we can ask but we don't have any special assignment there. We can always go there if we want and help them in usher or giving but not really obligation.

I think that our church is neutral they don't say anything about ethic but we have those smaller organisation .but we have those smaller organisation. Which are smaller organisation inside the church and they are say what is right and what is wrong and they thing these small organisations are the opinions of our official church. And here in Munkkiniemi church we don't follow so much what is going on higher levels of the church we know what people think here and we are quite open minded.

Does the church policy influence youth's attitude in the church?

I don't think those church policies influence young people attitude in the church.

What are the challenges faced by the young people in the church?

Emmh it is really hard to think.

I don't know. May be because many people want to be confirmation training group leader (isonen in Finnish) so it really hard to get bigger area for the next summer because there is not enough space

For camp meeting, how many people participate in it? How often do you have the camp meetings?

it depends sometime we have two camps in one month but the average is one in one and a half month. I think we have sometime liked six during the year.

It may be 30 or 40 and sometime 50.

How many days?

Two nights (Friday to Sunday)

Which activities take place apart from relaxation?

We have lessons about church or bible, special evening activities like playing some games, drama, and singing. We also do our own exhibition there. We make group like six people does the music, someone in charge of songs, preaching and others arrange the space.

In preparation to these camps, do you like practice the drama before hand?

No, usually we don't have time for that. We practice at the camp. We have time. When we distribute those groups we have time to prepare. Two hours to prepare then present it.

Youth interview involving three youths from Munkkiniemi.

Marie, I m from Cameroon studying intercultural studies in communication and administration in Vaasa where im doing a comparative research on youths participation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Agricola which is Finnish background and Munkkiniemi parish which is Swedish and Presbyterian church in Cameroon because I notice the activities and youth work are quite different that is why I was interested in the topic.

I have been here for three years six years

The first question is about youth policy which is a little bit trickish. Actually we do have the children who have done the confirmation camp and are going to guide the younger ones next year. So they have to do training.

Does the Lutheran church have a precise policy for youth work?

Yes I think so. I'm not sure about it.

Does this like influence youth work in the church?

Ok if it is trickish no problem.

Which are some of the activities in which youth participate in the Church?

We are in youth singing group, we attend weekend camps, we come every Wednesday and hang around as a group and may do a little bite of bible, subject or something-

How long does it last?

Well, from 18-21 but you can come later.

What do you do there?

There is first a programme then there is time for hanging out. From 6-7 pm, we study the bible and discuss club issues. From 19-21.00 we just hang out in the mess. Quiet moment.

Apart from the Wednesday and singing which other activity do you have?

I think that is it because we do not have so much other activities. For adults there are some things but for the young ones it is only this group.

What is the age range?

From 14-18 years. The new ones going to the camp are 14-15 years then the older ones are from 17-18

Which factors influence participation in the Church?

Emmh friends, you can forget everything else and be here yourself. Think your own thoughts.

Sometime I want to come here to be with myself, you can think what you want or may want to see an old friend.

Do you face some challenges in your youth meetings?

I haven't faced any difficulties because the church is really open minded and you can take care of every one in a special way. You can do something they do not mind.

Do the media influence youth participation in the church?

The church has its own new paper that comes every month but that paper does not influence us so much and most youths don't really read it.

Does the society influence it much?

Sometimes it is a bite negative but not all the time.

Some people think that you are out of your mind but not all the time. I don't think so

Do you have any vision or future hope for Munkkiniemi parish?

You would like that they should be more concerts because many young people are talented so we can arrange more concerts

Which recommendation can you give for other youth group in the church?

Read the bible.

Be active and do everything 100% done not have way and be open minded.

Do not judge any one.

How often do you have the confirmation camp?

The confirmation camp is done only once in your life. If you have done when you are 15years you can do it then you can get marry or be a God father or something like. If you want you can continue to be group leaders.

The confirmation camp...what is it all about. Bible study and having fun with friends.

How long does it last?

One week.

And for the normal camps how often is it? 5-6 times a year and last for a week end.

Youths interview in Presbyterian Church Down Beach Limbe, Cameroon.

1) How is the Presbyterian Church Structured?

The head of the PCC is the Moderator. Second in command is the Synod Clerk who is also the Chief of Personnel. Below the synod clerk are the Head of Departments, Presbyteries and the Standing Committees. Below the Presbyteries are the Parishes, Congregations and then Prayer Cells. It should be noted that the highest decision making is taken during the Synod Meetings that holds annually in the month of November.

2) Which Church policy is geared towards youth work?

The creation of a department for youth affair and the National Sunday School office is geared towards the improvement of youth work. The decision to elect a youth as and elder in every congregation of PCC is geared in improving the youth work of the church.

3) Does the church policies influence youth's participation in the church?

Yes it influences youth's participation in the church

4) In which activities are the youths involve in the church.

The youths through their movement, the C.Y.F participates in all the activities of the church. They process, sing, clean and also do financial contributions for the growth of the church. Youths are also in the Session part of the decision making body of the congregation and likewise the presbytery.

5) Which factors attribute to youth attitudes towards the church?

- i) The Session, Pastor and the youth movement relationship should be cordial.
- ii) The decision of 25years should be handle with maturity.

6) What are the challenges face by youth in your congregation?

- i) The aspect of above 25 years scared most of the big ones away from the manner in which it was introduced.
- ii) Our numerical strength (that is C.Y.F, Y.P and Sunday School) is

- iii) Elder members in the C.Y.F now are being mock by some C.M.F and C.W.F members to leave the C.Y.F
- iv) Most of the members are from peasant home thus financial contributions sometimes are difficult.
- v) Some members especially sisters are very heady and sometimes do not even participate in group activities.

7) Are there any vision for youth work in the church?

Yes the church has a vision for youth work but the aspect of above 25years should be handle with care because it has caused and still causing division in the youth department. We can also see the churches vision for the youth in the building of the youth secretariat in Kumba.

8) Recommendation for youth work in the future.

- i) The age limit should be move from 25years to 30 years because at 25 there is little a member can offer not to talk being a Zonal or a Presbytery executive.
- ii) The Central church should disburse money for the completion of the youth secretariat for the youths have done their best in the realization of the project.
- iii) Congregations should be encouraged to set another day for the children and youth Sunday because in February they cannot carry many activities due to their annual rally. During the summer holiday is a convenient period for such activities
- iv) Youth camps should be encourage even at the presbytery or Zonal levels.

ATANGA JOSEPH
TEL; 77,57,77,94

- 1) The Structure of the Presbytery Church is as follows beginning with the Least which is the most important to the top. We have the Congregation(s) lead by a Session (a group of Elders) with a chairperson being the head. Next the Parish comprising of some congregation in a given area. Next The Zone comprising of some Parishes in a given sub-division. This is followed by the Presbytery which is comprised of some Zones in a given division and in a given Region. It is lead by a presbytery executive made up of Elders and Pastors with the Presbyterian Secretary as the head. Lastly we have the Synod which is a collection of all the Presbyteries. It is being lead by a Synod Committee with its office in Buea and the moderator being the head.
- 2) The Policy geared toward the youth work is attributed toward the youth department of the P.E.C. It is actually concerned with all the activities involving the youths of the church. It is being headed by a Youth Secretary who organises activities involving the youths nationally such as rallies where he produces a working material for the youths known as the Youth Splash and others like regional meeting etc are being organised by him.
- 3) Yes, because it has made the youths to be involve and participatory in all the activities of the church carried out by the other movements of the church like CMF, CWF and the Choirs.
- 4) The youths are involved in all the activities in the church such as Rallies, Cometogethers, Liturgy, Preaching, Teaching, Reading of Lessons, Procession, Singing, Parade, Drama etc. Today they have also being incorporated in to the Session following a Synod decision which has made some CWF members Elders nation wide.
- 5) Some of the Factors most often attributed to youth attitudes toward the church results from the Congregation (Session) as most often the youths are

Considered Least privilege. In this light not much attention is given to them in activities being carried out in the church as compared with the other movements and choirs. Also they are usually Levy huge amounts of money during activities like harvest and other church contributions without the consideration of their strength and financial status. However some of the youths are very rebellious toward the session decisions maybe because of the above mention.

- 6) The Challenges Faced by the youths in my congregation are that; most of the youths are unemployed, so most often fail to meet up with their Levies for harvest and other church contributions. Also the youths are not given enough time to express their talents in the church as they have just one Sunday in every year to do so. The issue of the Synod decision limiting the age of the youth like in CUF to 25 years has been a problem as it has made most of those who are above that age unable to leading to a crisis of membership.
- 7) I want to believe so following the youth Secretariate building under construction in Kumba to fully expand some offices of the youth work and also the decision of making a CUF members an Elder part of the session is like more is to come.
- 8) I wish to recommend for the youth work in the future to ensure the addition of more days to the children and youth Sunday for the youth since we are the future of tomorrow were we could express our talents of lay preaching, Liturgy, Teaching etc. They should also institute and encourage educational Forum, Seminars and Workshops for the youths. They should also try to execute projects and subsidised them as well as M.GOs of youths of the church so as to combat youths unemployment.

Agwetang Lazarus Njoh
tel: 74.87.86.55/97371263

(1) The Presbyterian church is structured in an hierarchical manner beginning from top to bottom. It is of Order. The Synod is the highest body; the next is the regional Committee, presbyteries, parishes, and the congregation. The Synod has as its heads—the moderator, Synod clerk, Secretary and other standing boards and committees and Secretaries who stand as executives of this set-up. While the Congregation have their pastors, elders, head, lay preachers, Liturgist, readers and the church and choirs in their order. The Presbyterian church is a well organised church.

(2) The policy geared toward youth work came to the department of the church ~~was~~ ^{were} created. The main aim of the youth department, to develop the church, it was to give funding or financing to the youth since the church lies more on them. The church therefore has special collection such as youth work Fund, scholars education fund and many others for upkeep of the P.C.C.

(3) The response is a big yes. The church policies create the full participation of the youth in all church activities. They are involved in almost all activities of the church. At all levels of the church they are recognised in all activities. From national level down to congregational level.

(4) Some of the activities the youth are involved in the church includes amongst others, preaching, reading, and edification service. They participate in cleaning, and procession, parade, memory verses, and many others. The youth are

when carrying out an activity in the congregation ^{congregated} ~~the~~ to other movement like C.M.T and the C.W.F.
 Secondly the youth are always seen with much inferiority complex when it comes to Contribution in the church irrespective whether the youths are of working class or not.
 Thirdly they are always consider gate-scratcher whether they have a part to play or not at occasions.
 A lot of this and the unmentioned attributes to youths attitude toward the church.

(6) The youth are faced with much challenges. These challenges can only be attend if the church authorities could listen and yield to the demands of the youth. They have the talent to preach, to read, sing, act drama and many other. This thing could not be attend when the authority do not open avenues for them to be performed.

(7) There are much vision for youth work in our church. The youth could do better if granted the opportunities in all activities. Youth with good talents not necessarily with higher Certificates of Learning could be sorted and sent to Theological Seminary, for future pastoral ministry, More be incorporated to the ranks of elders. Youth activities be given chance atleast once in a month to be perform in the congregation etc. With this and many others, we shall have a bright and prosperous future.

(8) To recommend youth work in future, if the youth are given more place in our church today and much encouragement we shall have a very bright youth in future for it paved way for the younger general. Without this push, we shall have ageing future.

Bro Asah Johanness M
 Tel. 74 68 11 20.

ANSWERS

- 1) The Presbyterian church is well structured with all the various departments put in place. It begins from the laity to the congregation, elders, parish, Presbytery and the synod or Synod Committee.
- 2) The ~~Set-up~~ ^{P.C.C} of constitution page one says: the mission of the church is to proclaim the Good News of God through Jesus Christ in word and action. The proclamation of this Good News includes preaching the word, teaching, healing and liberating the people of God from sin (Luke 4:18-19).
The church is the only institution that witnesses the right, social justice, truth and peace in the social, economic and political life of the country in which she lives.
- 3) Yes it ~~does~~ because youths have duties to participate in the church as contained in C-1/F promise.
- 4) In the church the youths are involved in spiritual and physical discipline activities like Bible studies, reading and exposition, Bible dramatisation, recitation, Bible drills, debates and songs singing.
- 5) Positively: rally activities act as a means of evangelisation which attracts many new member in to the church.
 → financial support has always been given to the youths but,
Negatively: moral and physical supports are hardly there.

ANSW

→ Denying the youths for preaching in the main congregation and reading hinders the youth growth in the church.

6) Youths are not given the chance to take part in some church activities even when they show interest.

7) There are positive visions for youth work in the church since youth pastors and youths co-ordinators have been put in place to ensure youth success. ~~to an extent we don't~~ know when these visions shall come to pass due to the fact that there are some training programmes here in Cameroon sponsored by foreign bodies which some times ~~such~~ such programmes do not even hold or hold while some special youths are inform not because of their work in the church, but ^{due} to their parents position in the church.

8) The youth should be trained as evangelists of the church. ~~if~~ youths should be given the chance to take part in church activities no matter how many times they fail; they fail to stand. (I quote: John C. Maxwell defines success as moving from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.)

III The youth handbook should ^{be} revised for better clarification of youth work and the place of the youths in the church.

IV The National days for the youths meeting and others should also be respected nationally as respected internationally by our partners. Chia Randy 75 819655
97-85-80-68